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THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

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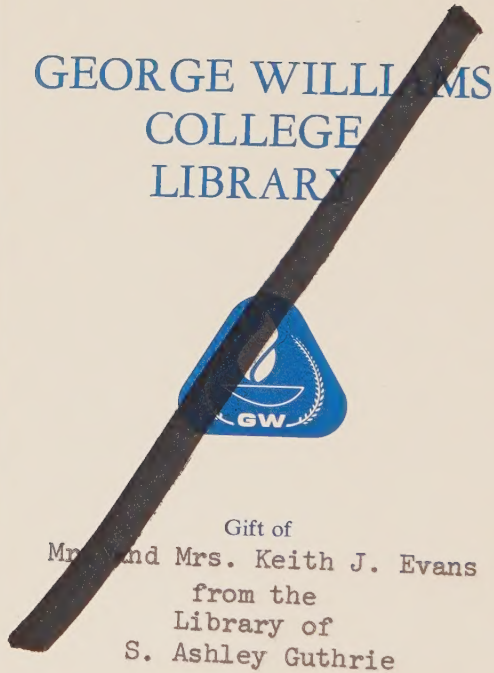

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NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE

THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

By WALTER GEER

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION:
A Historical Sketch

NAPOLEON THE FIRST:
An Intimate Biography

NAPOLEON THE THIRD:
The Romance of an Emperor

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION AND EMPIRE:
Translated and adapted from the Journal d'une Femme de Cinquante Ans by the Marquise de La Tour du Pin

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JOSÉPHINE

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NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE

THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

BY

WALTER GEER

AUTHOR OF "THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,"
"NAPOLEON THE FIRST," "NAPOLEON THE THIRD," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

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FOREWORD

IN the popular estimation the Empress Joséphine is crowned with a halo of goodness which makes the task of her biographer one of peculiar difficulty. The aversion which many feel towards Napoleon is not a little due to what they conceive to be the cruelty with which he treated the woman who for fourteen years was the companion of his glory. The writer of this book holds no brief either for the prosecution or the defence. He wants to draw a portrait — not to pronounce a judgment: his object is to depict Joséphine as she was, and he leaves the reader to decide as to her goodness.

WALTER GEER

NEW YORK, October, 1924.

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NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE
THE RISE OF THE EMPIRE

NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE
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CHAPTER ONE

1763–1779

EARLY YEARS OF JOSEPHINE

The Island of Martinique — The Tascher Family — François de Beauharnais — Madame Renaudin — Birth of Alexandre de Beauharnais — Birth of Joséphine — A Confusion of Dates — M. Beauharnais in France — Death of His Wife — Misfortunes of the Taschers — Childhood of Joséphine — Her Education — Her Appearance and Character — Alexandre de Beauharnais — His Early Years — His Education — Madame Renaudin's Interest in Him

ON THE outer rim of the Caribbean Sea, in the middle of the chain of the Lesser Antilles, between the British possessions of Dominica and St. Lucia, lies Martinique, the birthplace of Joséphine. The island is only forty miles long, by twenty wide, and its area of less than four hundred square miles makes it about a third the size of the smallest state in the Union. A cluster of volcanic mountains in the north, a similar group in the south, and a line of lower heights between them form the backbone of the island. The deep ravines and precipitous escarpments, culminating on the north in the *massif* of Mont-Pelé, are reduced in appearance to gentle undulations by the drapery of the forests. The few miles of country between the watershed and

the sea are traversed by numerous streams, of which nearly fourscore are of considerable size, and in the rainy season become raging torrents.

At the southerly end, a lateral range, branching from the backbone of the island, forms a blunt peninsula bounding on the south the beautiful low-shored bay of Fort-de-France, on which is located the city of the same name, formerly known as Fort-Royal, the capital of the island. On this peninsula, directly across the bay from the capital, is the little hamlet of Trois-Îlets, where Joséphine was born.

By some authorities, Martinique is said to have been discovered by Columbus in 1493, the year of his second voyage, but it was not until 1635 that possession was taken by the French *Compagnie des Îles d'Amérique*. During the next hundred years, Martinique had a full share of wars. It experienced several revolutions of different kinds, and was attacked on numerous occasions by the British and the Dutch, but always without success. It was finally captured, however, by Rodney in 1762, and was only returned to France, by the Treaty of Paris, in the following year, a few days before the birth of Joséphine. Like Napoleon, therefore, she had a narrow escape from not being born under the French flag.

In 1726, there landed in Martinique a noble of Blois, named Gaspard-Joseph Tascher de la Pagerie, who, like many others, came to seek his fortune. He belonged to an old family which could trace its origin back at least to the middle of the fifteenth century. His great-grandfather had established himself in Blois in 1650, after having sold his *seigneurie* of la Pagerie, of which, how-

ever, his descendants continued to use the name. His grandfather, retired with the grade of captain of cavalry, exhausted his last resources, in 1674, in recruiting a squadron of the noblesse of Blois. He left only one son, Gaspard, who, in spite of his good marriages, did not succeed in restoring the family fortunes. Gaspard left two sons, of whom the younger rose to considerable prominence in the Church. The elder, named Gaspard-Joseph, after his grandfather, was a *mauvais sujet*. To escape a life of genteel poverty at home, he decided to try his fortunes in the New World. Little is known of the early years of his life in Martinique, but four years after his arrival, he presented to the Council a request to have his titles registered, in order to preserve his rights and privileges as a member of the noblesse. On account of the many formalities, and the delays in hearing from France, this matter dragged along over a period of fifteen years. In the meantime, in 1734, he married a young woman of good, if not noble, family, who brought him a considerable dot. He was not at all successful in his business ventures, however, and was finally obliged to take a clerical position. By his marriage, he had five children, two sons and three daughters; but we are only interested in the elder son, Joseph-Gaspard, and the eldest daughter, Désirée.

In 1752, Joseph-Gaspard, who was then seventeen years of age, left Martinique to take a position as page in the household of the Dauphine, Marie-Josèphe of Saxony, the mother of the future King Louis the Sixteenth. This place had been secured for him by the Abbé de Tascher. After passing three years in France,

he returned to Martinique with a brevet commission as sous-lieutenant in the Navy.

At this time, thirty years after the arrival of Gaspard-Joseph on the island, the family was living in a state of abject misery, without money or social position.

In April 1755, in a period of entire peace between the two nations, an English fleet of ten vessels, under the command of Admiral Boscawen, captured two French battle-ships near the south coast of Newfoundland. It soon became evident that plans had been laid by the British Government to attack all the French colonies. In this emergency the King, Louis the Fifteenth, had need in the Islands of an officer of force and intelligence, and on the first of November 1756 he appointed François de Beauharnais as governor and lieutenant-general of all the French possessions in the West Indies.

The new governor, although only forty-two years of age, had a record of twenty-seven years of distinguished service in the Navy. Notwithstanding the fact that most of this period was passed at Rochefort, his native place, and that he had seen no active service, he was very highly esteemed for the efficiency with which he had always discharged the duties of his various positions.

Monsieur de Beauharnais, (who was not made a marquis until eight years later), belonged to a a family of the *noblesse de la robe*, rather than of the sword. He was the eldest son of a naval captain, Claude, and of a Mlle. Hardouineau, whose mother had married for her second husband the then Marquis de Beauharnais. As nephew of one and grandson of the other he

was later to bear the title and to succeed to the hôtel in the Rue Thévenot, in Paris, where the marquis died in 1749.

When François de Beauharnais landed in Martinique, as governor, in May 1757, he was accompanied by his young wife, whom he had married six years before. She was his cousin, and had brought him a large dot. He also had a small income of his own which he had inherited from a bachelor uncle. They had had two sons, of whom only one was then living — François, born the previous year.

What possible point of contact could there be between this *grand seigneur,* arriving as master in Martinique, rich with his income of 100,000 and his salary of 150,000 livres, and these Taschers living in misery in a corner of the island?

As above stated, Gaspard-Joseph had three daughters, and in some unknown way he was successful in obtaining for the eldest, Désirée, a position in the household of the governor, as an upper servant or *demoiselle de compagnie.* Once installed in the mansion it did not take her long to secure a dominating influence over the governor and his wife, and her favor was in no way diminished by her marriage to an ordonnance officer of M. de Beauharnais, Alexis Renaudin, a young man of good family and connections. But it required all of the authority of the governor to arrange the matter, as the Renaudins objected strongly to the match — not so much on account of the lack of dot, as because of the general discredit of the Taschers. Finally, M. Renaudin *père* died, and the mother gave a reluctant consent.

After her marriage the power of the young Madame Renaudin seemed to increase from day to day. A good husband was found for one of her younger sisters, a command in the militia for her father, and a place on the governor's staff for her brother.

The administration of M. de Beauharnais proved a failure. Charges of such gravity were made against him in France that he was recalled from his government, and only saved from disgrace by the influence of powerful friends at home. By this time his infatuation for Madame Renaudin was so great that he was reluctant to leave Martinique, and the interesting condition of his wife served as an excuse. On the 28 May 1760, another son was born, who received the name of Alexandre. Still M. de Beauharnais lingered on the island, and it was not until the month of April in the following year that he and his wife finally sailed for France, with the inseparable Madame Renaudin in their suite. In order not to expose the young Alexandre to the hazards of the voyage, he was left behind, in charge of Madame Tascher *mère*.

Before the departure of M. de Beauharnais, he arranged yet another marriage for the Tascher family, and on the 9 November 1761, Joseph-Gaspard, the former page of the Dauphine, led to the altar Mlle. Rose-Claire des Vergers de Sannois. She was descended from the old noblesse of Brie, and belonged to one of the most highly considered families in the colony. Rose-Claire, who was born in August 1736, had already passed her twenty-fifth birthday, and was very glad to find a husband. The marriage, which was celebrated before the curé of Trois-Îlets, was not honored by the

presence of any of the dignitaries of the colony. Even the father of the groom was not present, for some unknown reason.

From this marriage there was born on the 23 June 1763, a daughter, who five weeks later received in baptism the names of Marie-Joseph-Rose: this was Joséphine.

During the three following years, Mme. de la Pagerie had two more daughters: Désirée, born the 11 December 1764, who died at the age of thirteen; and Françoise, born the 3 September 1766, who died at the age of twenty-five.

At this point we find a confusion in the records which it is not easy to explain. Under date of the 5 September 1791, there is an entry of the burial of Marie-Joseph-Rose. There is also in existence a document of questionable authenticity from which it would appear that a demoiselle Tascher gave birth the 17 March 1786, to a daughter who was adopted by Mme. de la Pagerie, and was given a dot of 60,000 francs by the Emperor Napoleon twenty-two years later, on the occasion of her marriage. In the certificate of baptism of this child, the mother may have borrowed the name of her sister Joséphine, who was certainly in France at that date, and the same name quite naturally might be used in her burial certificate. In any case, there is no possible doubt as to the personality of Marie-Joseph-Rose, nor as to the date of her birth. But this confusion of names and dates enabled Joséphine, when she wished to appear younger at the time of her second marriage, to claim that she was born in 1766.

The Treaty of Paris, which ended the struggle be-

tween England and France, was signed on the 10 February 1763, but the news did not reach Martinique until the end of the following month. The French fleet, charged with taking possession of the island, arrived the middle of June, and the white banner of the Bourbons was hoisted once more, just a week before the birth of Joséphine.

In the meantime, in France, M. de Beauharnais, through the support of powerful friends at Court, had succeeded not only in having suppressed the record of his unsuccessful administration, but in securing a pension of 12,000 livres, the rank of chef d'escadre, and the title of marquis. At the same time he also obtained a small pension for M. de la Pagerie.

Madame Renaudin, after passing a short time in a convent, openly took up her residence with the marquis, both in the city and the country, and his wife, who seems for a long time to have been blind to their relations, left Paris to live near her mother at Blois. From time to time, she made short visits to the city, and it was on one of these occasions that she died, in October 1767.

Madame Renaudin was now in full control of the situation, and to consolidate her power she began to lay plans for the future.

The pension of 450 livres which M. de la Pagerie had obtained from the Court proved very useful when he was practically ruined by the great storm of August 1766, which, combined with an earthquake, devastated Martinique, throwing down houses and destroying plantations. On the Tascher estate nothing was left standing except the sugar refinery, to which the family

fled for shelter. In this building, altered so as to make it habitable, the family continued to live for the next twenty-five years. Aubenas visited the place in the middle of the last century, when it was not much changed since the days of Joséphine's childhood. The village Trois-Îlets then contained about fifty frame houses, and a small church, in which was the family vault of the Taschers. The plantation was located about a mile beyond the town, and the description of Aubenas is interesting:

The homestead is situated on a slight eminence, surrounded by larger hills, only a few steps from the sea, although it is out of sight, and even out of hearing. From the extent of the buildings still standing, and the ruins which the eye can make out, it is possible to judge the former importance of the estate, one of the largest in this once flourishing quarter of the island. The dwelling-house, originally constructed on a large scale, has become since the storm of 1766 a simple wooden structure. Next comes the sugar-mill with its circle of heavy pillars and its huge roof of red tiles of native manufacture. A few paces from the mill is the refinery, a large building, over forty yards long by twenty wide. On looking at the monumental solidity of this structure it is possible to understand how it withstood the terrible storm. During the years which followed, the building was adapted to shelter the Tascher family. A low gallery was added on the southern side, and rooms were fitted up in the upper part until a new dwelling-house could be erected. Built on the slope of the hill were the huts of the negroes, and

round about were the sheds and other buildings used in the manufacture of the sugar.

Amid such surroundings the future empress and queen passed the years of her childhood, with no society except that of the slaves, and no culture intellectual or moral. When she was ten years of age she was sent to the school of the Dames de la Providence at Fort-Royal, where she remained four years. Her education was then thought to be complete, and she returned to Trois-Îlets. In fact she had received little more than a primary-school training, with a few lessons in music and dancing.

At this time Joséphine was far from being the finished coquette that she became later on. She had a good complexion, fine eyes, pretty hands and feet; but her face was full, without marked traits, her nose *relevé* and ordinary, her figure heavy and ungraceful. Her mind was hardly cultivated, but to the convent she owed at least quite an elegant penmanship, with an orthography not much worse than that of most of her contemporaries. She had a slender voice, and sang to the accompaniment of a guitar. In character, she was very sweet, submissive to authority, very amiable, always ready to do any one a favor; and such she remained all her life.

While Joséphine was passing her childhood at Trois-Îlets, the boy Alexandre de Beauharnais was living at Fort-Royal with the elder Madame Tascher. It was not until two years after the death of his mother, towards the end of the year 1769, that his father arranged to have him brought back to France. At that time he was over nine years of age. There is a record

of his baptism, under date of 15 January 1770, on the parish registers of the church of Saint-Sulpice at Paris. His godmother was the "*haute et puissante dame Marie-Euphémie-Désirée Tascher de la Pagerie, épouse de M. Renaudin, écuyer, ancien major de l'île de Sainte-Lucie.*"

In order to complete his education, which had been much neglected, Alexandre was placed with his brother in the Collège du Plessis, founded by the great Cardinal Richelieu, which at that time was the rival of Louis-le-Grand at Paris. Later the boys were sent for two years, with their tutor Patricol, to the University of Heidelberg to learn the German language.

In 1774, François entered the army, and Patricol was engaged by the Duc de La Rochefoucauld as preceptor for the two sons of his sister, Rohan-Chabot, and he took Alexandre with him. It thus happened that the most impressionable years of the boy's life were passed in the ducal château of Roche-Guyon.

During all these years Madame Renaudin never lost sight of him. She made every effort to secure over the son the same influence which she exercised over the father. In the plans which she had formed for the future, Alexandre held the principal rôle. The resources of the marquis were very limited, and the expenses of the household were paid largely from the income of the fortune which the boy had inherited from his mother. This money Madame Renaudin intended if possible to keep in the family.

CHAPTER TWO

1779–1790

MARRIAGE AND SEPARATION

Alexandre de Beauharnais Enters the Army — Madame Renaudin Plans for His Marriage — The Marquis Writes M. de la Pagerie — Joséphine Takes Her Sister's Place — She Arrives in France — The Contract Signed — The Marriage — Life in Paris — Birth of Eugène — Alexandre Sails for Martinique — Birth of Hortense — Alexandre Repudiates Joséphine — He Returns to France — Refuses a Reconciliation — A Separation Arranged — Joséphine's Sojourn at the Panthémont — Residence at Fontainebleau — Voyage to Martinique

WHEN Alexandre de Beauharnais was sixteen years of age, in December 1776, he received through the favor of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld a commission as sous-lieutenant in his regiment of the Sarre-infanterie. At this time he abandoned the courtesy title of chevalier, then given to the younger sons of noble families, and assumed that of vicomte, to which he had no valid claim. Dressed in his handsome new uniform of white cloth, with facings of silver-gray, the young vicomte proceeded to Rouen, where his regiment had just arrived in garrison. Here he went through his military exercises, and perfected himself in mathematics and horsemanship. At this time he was far from thinking of marriage, but he did not know the plans of that "high and mighty dame," his godmother.

When he returned home to pass a six months' leave of absence, Madame Renaudin played her cards so well that Alexandre readily assented to her ideas, in order more quickly to enjoy his fortune. On the 23 October 1777, the marquis wrote the following letter to M. de la Pagerie:

"Each of my children has at present an income of forty thousand livres. It is in your power to give me one of your daughters to share the fortune of my chevalier. The respect and attachment which he has for Madame de Renaudin make him ardently desire to be united to one of her nieces. I assure you that I only acquiesce in his wishes in asking you for the second, whose age is the most suitable for him.

"I deeply regret that your eldest daughter is not a few years younger: she certainly would have had the preference, for I have formed an equally favorable opinion of her; but I must admit that my son, who is only seventeen and a half years old, thinks that a young lady of fifteen is too nearly of his own age. There are occasions when sensible parents are forced to yield to circumstances."

As Alexandre, besides the income of 40,000 livres from the estate of his mother, had expectations of 25,000 more, the marquis did not request M. de la Pagerie to furnish any dot. He only asked that the father make haste to bring his daughter to France; or, if he could not come himself, to send her with a trustworthy companion, by a commercial vessel, as "she would have a more comfortable and agreeable voyage."

When this letter of the marquis reached Martinique, the second daughter of M. de la Pagerie, Désirée, was

dead, of a malignant fever, at the age of thirteen; and the youngest daughter, Françoise, was not yet twelve years old. In January, the father writes that, in default of the second daughter, he is willing to offer the third, but that it would be better to accept the first. He says that she (Joséphine) has a very fine complexion, and very beautiful arms, and that she is very anxious to go to Paris.

Madame Renaudin's plan was that Alexandre should marry *one* of her nieces: she did not care whether it was the youngest or the oldest. Therefore, without wasting time in vain regrets over the death of Désirée, she wrote her brother, in March 1778, "Come with one of your girls, or two; whatever you do will be agreeable to us. *We must have one of your children.*"

In reply to this letter, M. de la Pagerie wrote, the last of June, that his youngest daughter had been ill for three months, and was in no condition to travel, and that he would bring Joséphine. When received, in September, this information was communicated to Alexandre, who was then stationed with his regiment near Brest, and he accepted the substitution with good grace, though with little enthusiasm.

Before M. de la Pagerie could sail, however, France and England were again at war, and his departure was delayed for more than a year. Finally, in October 1779, Madame Renaudin received a letter from her brother, announcing that he and his daughter had arrived at Brest, after a terrible voyage, and that he was detained there by illness. She at once set out with Alexandre to join them.

This was the first encounter between Alexandre and

Joséphine since their childhood days, as she was only six years old when he left Martinique. To judge by his letters to his father at this time, he was far from enthusiastic over his Creole fiancée. He said that she was not as pretty as his father might expect, but that the sweetness of her character surpassed anything that had been said of her.

The party of four travelled slowly to Paris, where they arrived the middle of November, and joined the marquis in his hôtel, Rue Thévenot, where he was just installed. The banns had already been published three times in Martinique in April, and they were now published again in Paris. Madame Renaudin at once occupied herself with ordering the trousseau, for which she expended the large sum of twenty thousand livres.

On the 10 December the contract was signed at the hôtel of the marquis in the presence of all the male members of the family, no ladies being present! Of the family of the bride, there was present, aside from M. de la Pagerie and his sister, only a very distant cousin.

As Alexandre had so large an income, the marquis did not make any settlement on him at the time of the marriage. The dot of the bride was furnished by her aunt. Besides the trousseau, already mentioned, Madame Renaudin gave her a house at Noisy-le-Grand, in the vicinity of Paris, which she had purchased in October 1776, for the sum of 33,000 livres, and had furnished at a further cost of about 30,000 livres. To use the expression commonly employed by ladies in those days (and perhaps since), when they did not care to state from what source their money was derived,

these funds were doubtless the "proceeds of her diamonds."

Three days after the signing of the contract, on the 13 December 1779, the marriage was celebrated in the church at Noisy, in the presence of nearly the same persons who witnessed the signing of the contract. No woman signed the register!

Immediately after the marriage, the young couple took up their residence in the sombre hôtel of the marquis in Paris. For the young Creole it was a sad change from the brilliant sunshine, the entire liberty, and the *dolce far niente* of the Antilles. The Beauharnais had few friends in Paris, and Joséphine had not even an acquaintance. In the spring, Alexandre returned to his regiment at Brest, and Joséphine remained in Paris with her father-in-law, her aunt, and her father, who was still ill.

Returning to Paris, when his regiment was ordered to Verdun, Alexandre made no effort to introduce his wife in society. He thought her awkward and ignorant: even worse, she seemed to him plain, devoid of grace and *tournure*, with ridiculous ideas of conjugal love, tenderness and jealousy. He had married to be free to enjoy his fortune, and he had no intention of being tied down to his wife. It was difficult enough to secure entry to the Court for himself alone, and he owed his position there mainly to the fact that he was a fine dancer. He could never hope to introduce a wife who had neither money, nor friends, nor social position. In fact, despite the legends to the contrary, Joséphine was never presented at the Court of Marie-Antoinette.

While Alexandre visited from château to château,

his wife continued to lead the same quiet, uneventful life at Noisy or at Paris. On the 3 September 1781, she gave birth in the hôtel, Rue Thévenot, to a son, who the following day was baptized in the church of Saint-Sauveur, and received the name of Eugène.

The first of November, Alexandre left Paris for a trip to Italy, from which he did not return until the end of July. For a short time after his return, he was more attentive to his wife, but the improvement in their relations did not last long. One who knew him well has said that he was " d'une grande coquetterie avec les femmes," and such he remained until the end of his life. Joséphine was naturally of a jealous temperament, and she certainly had reason enough to " faire des scènes."

Alexandre was hardly back a month in Paris before he was thinking of leaving again. At that time M. de Bouillé, the governor of the Windward Islands, was in France with the object of persuading the Government to authorize an expedition against the English. Warmly supported by his old patron, M. de La Rochefoucauld, Alexandre tried, but in vain, to secure the position of aide de camp to Bouillé. He was so determined to leave, however, that on the 26 September 1782 he sailed for Martinique as a simple volunteer, having obtained an indefinite leave of absence from the Minister of War. He arrived at the island in the month of November, but found no chance to distinguish himself, as the war was drawing to a close. The preliminaries of peace were signed the 20 January 1783, and all hostilities ceased in the Antilles as soon as the news was received.

On the 10 April 1783 a daughter was born to Joséphine in the new hôtel of the marquis, Rue Saint-Charles, and was baptized the following day as Hortense-Eugénie. In the certificate the father is described as " Vicomte de Beauharnais, Baron de Beauville, capitaine au régiment de la Sarre, actuellement en Amérique pour le service du Roi."

At that time it took at least two months for a letter to go from Paris to Martinique, and Alexandre did not receive the news before the middle of June. After waiting three weeks, he wrote Joséphine as follows:

" If I had written you in the first moment of my anger, my pen would have burnt the paper . . . ; but for more than three weeks I know, at least in part, what I wish you to understand. In spite then of the despair of my soul, the rage which suffocates me, I shall know how to restrain myself; I shall know how to tell you coldly that you are in my eyes the vilest of human beings; that my stay here has enabled me to learn of the abominable life you led here; that I know, in the fullest particulars, your intrigue with M. de B., officer of the Régiment de la Martinique, also that with M. d'H. . . . ; I know finally the contents of your letters and I will bring with me one of the presents you made . . . I do not ask you for repentance: you are incapable of it; a person who, while making her preparations to depart, could receive her lover in her arms, when she knows that she is destined for another, has no soul; she is lower than all the *coquines* on earth. . . . What can I think of this last child, born more than eight months after my return from Italy? I am forced to accept it, but I swear by the Heaven which enlightens me that it be-

longs to another, that it is the blood of a stranger which flows in its veins. . . . Make your own arrangements accordingly; never, never, will I put myself in a position to be abused again, and as you are a woman to impose on the public if we live under the same roof, have the goodness to retire to a convent, as soon as you receive my letter; it is my last word, and nothing on earth can make me change it. I will go to see you on my arrival in Paris, once only: I wish to have a talk with you and to give you something."

It is impossible to read this letter without feeling that Alexandre at the time sincerely believed that he had been wronged by Joséphine both before and after their union. During his stay in Martinique, he had begun, as usual, to "courir les femmes," and had formed a liaison with a young woman who was an enemy of the Taschers, jealous of the fine marriage which Madame Renaudin had arranged for her niece, and ready to employ all means to disturb the peace of the family. It was from her that Alexandre obtained the information as to Joséphine's early love affairs.

After arranging to meet his mistress in Paris, Alexandre sailed the middle of August, and arrived in France six weeks later. He found awaiting him at the port letters from his father and Madame Renaudin, attempting to bring about a reconciliation. En route for Paris he wrote Joséphine that he was surprised to learn that she was not yet in a convent, and that his decision was unalterable. On receiving this letter at Noisy, Joséphine rushed to Paris, to meet her husband on his arrival, but Alexandre did not go to his father's house.

Every possible effort was made by the marquis and Madame Renaudin to effect a reconciliation, but the vicomte remained inflexible. After a month of fruitless attempts, Joséphine retired, with her aunt, to the Abbaye de Panthémont, Rue de Grenelle, and early in December began a formal action for separation. In her complaint she sets forth in the greatest detail the existence which she has led; the indifference of her husband, who in nearly three years of married life has passed less than ten months with her. In conclusion she states the formal refusal of her husband to resume their life in common, and files a copy of the letter quoted above, which constitutes her principal grievance against him.

It is certain that if Alexandre had any proofs of the misconduct of Joséphine subsequent to their marriage, he would not have hesitated at this time to bring them forward. The allegation regarding Hortense is disproved by a simple examination of the dates. As for the other charges, fifteen months later he voluntarily and explicitly withdrew them. In March 1785, he met Joséphine in the office of his notary and consented formally to a separation. All the provisions of this act are greatly to the honor of Joséphine, and prove conclusively that there was no basis for the grave charges Alexandre had made when under the spell of an ignoble woman.

Joséphine was to live where she pleased; to receive from her husband an allowance of 5000 livres a year; to have the custody of Eugène until he was five years old; to keep Hortense, for whose maintenance her *father* was to pay 1000 livres quarterly in advance until she was seven years old, and 1500 livres after that age.

Alexandre further agreed to pay all the legal expenses of the suit. Such was the end of this famous action, from which Joséphine carried off all the honors of war.

The sojourn of Joséphine at Panthémont was of great advantage to her in every way. The Abbaye was like an immense furnished hôtel, of the highest respectability, open only to women of "la première distinction," and there Joséphine for the first time had an opportunity of meeting women of her own social rank. She was received as the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais, an unfortunate, irreproachable young woman, the victim of a cruel husband.

For a woman of the world, Joséphine already possessed two of the essential requisites: she was a coquette and she knew how to lie. In these two respects, her husband undoubtedly had a grievance against her. And to these two qualities, Joséphine adds, by the faculty of assimilation which is one of her strongest traits, that physical education which in a new society is to place her in a class by herself. Little by little a transformation is effected in her personality, which changes the heavy and awkward Creole into a being delicate and *souple,* a being desirable above all, who knows how to attract and to hold. From every point of view this retreat of fifteen months was profitable to her.

On leaving the Panthémont early in 1786 Joséphine, at twenty-three years of age, found herself free, with an income of 9000 livres for the support of Hortense and herself. At this time she sold the estate at Noisy, and with the proceeds she bought at Fontainebleau a little house, where she went to live with her aunt and the marquis. They had a few friends in that local-

ity, and in their society the days passed pleasantly. At that time the Court was obliged to practice the strictest economy, and for two years the royal hunt was abandoned.

In September 1786, under the terms of the act of separation, Eugène was sent to his father, who placed him at school. Hortense was brought home from Chelles, where she had been for two years with a nurse, and was at once inoculated, by orders of the marquis, who was a great believer in all innovations.

Abandoned at twenty-three years by her husband, whose liaisons with other women were open and notorious; attractive, passionate, extremely coquette, is it probable that Joséphine did not have a lover? Several names have been mentioned in this connection, but we have no proofs. All we know is that in June 1788 Joséphine suddenly sailed for Martinique, taking Hortense with her. None of her biographers has ever been able to find a satisfactory explanation of this voyage. It has been surmised that it was either for the purpose of concealing the results of her imprudence, or else was on account of the pressing need of money. But, if the latter, was it not easier to await at Fontainebleau the remittances from her father, who acted as agent of the marquis, than to go three thousand miles in search of them? In default of any documents we are reduced to conjectures, and with our knowledge of Joséphine can only imagine one of two reasons: debts or love. The biographers friendly to Joséphine attribute her journey to the former cause; but it is rather strange that her enemies have not seized on the fact that Decrès, writing by Napoleon's orders in 1807,

spoke of "the demoiselle of *eighteen* years, whom Madame de la Pagerie has adopted." Had this girl, known as Marie-Bénaquette Tascher de la Pagerie, been really only eighteen years of age at that time, she must have been born early in 1789, that is to say during this visit of Joséphine, and not in March 1786, as stated in the document of doubtful authenticity already mentioned. Therefore, on the ground of date alone, there was no reason why "Marie-Joseph-Rose," as stated in the certificate, could not have been the mother, instead of Marie-Françoise. Turquan, who is always unfriendly to Joséphine, does not hesitate to insinuate that Joséphine had a daughter during this visit to Martinique in 1789, six years after her separation from her husband, and gives as his authority a study of M. Frédéric Masson upon *Joséphine avant Bonaparte,* published in the *Revue de Paris*. This girl, Marie-Bénaquette, was married in March 1808 to the private secretary of the captain-general of Martinique, a Monsieur Blanchet, and her dot of sixty thousand francs was provided by the Emperor, doubtless at the request of Joséphine. The whole episode is a curious one, to say the least.

Whatever her motive may have been, Joséphine was in great haste to leave France at the earliest possible moment. Finding on her arrival at Havre that the government vessel which she had expected to take could not sail for two weeks, she engaged passage for Hortense and herself on a private ship, and sailed at once.

The voyage was pleasant and rapid. Arrived at Martinique Joséphine went directly to Trois-Îlets, where

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she remained nearly two years. We have no record of this visit, but her life must have been very dull. The family was very poor, and both her father and her sister Françoise were ill.

Her father died in November 1790, two months after Joséphine's departure, and her sister a year later.

CHAPTER THREE

1789–1794

THE REVOLUTION

Beauharnais Elected to the States-General — Joséphine Returns from Martinique — Alexandre, President of the Assembly — Flight of the Royal Family — End of the Constituent Assembly — Alexandre Rejoins the Army — Promoted and Made Commander of the Army of the Rhine — His Disgraceful Failure — His Resignation Accepted — Joséphine at Paris and Croissy — Alexandre at Blois — Both Arrested and Confined in the Carmes — Execution of Alexandre

ON the 5 May 1789, the States-General assembled at Versailles, and Alexandre de Beauharnais was one of the members. He had presented himself to the noblesse of Blois as a candidate for the place of one of the two deputies to be elected by that bailiwick, and was chosen almost unanimously through the influence of Lavoisier. This was the fermier-général Lavoisier, member of the Academy of Sciences. Established only twenty years at Blois, he had acquired by his liberality a great popularity. He was the real head of the electoral assembly, of which he was chosen secretary, and it was he who drafted the *cahier des doléances*.

This memorandum of grievances, which Alexandre was charged to support, was wholly inspired by the doctrines of Rousseau, and was the most revolutionary of any presented to the King.

Beauharnais was faithful to his mandate, and on his arrival at Versailles he ranged himself with the minority

of the Noblesse — the *Forty-seven* — beside Aiguillon, La Fayette, Lally-Tollendal, La Rochefoucauld and the Duc d'Orléans.

On the night of the 4 August, when feudal rights were abolished, and " every man generously gave away what he did not own," Alexandre took a leading part. In recognition of his attitude on this occasion, on the 23 November, after the Assembly had moved to Paris, Beauharnais was chosen one of the three secretaries, with Aiguillon as president.

While Alexandre was thus playing one of the principal rôles in the Constituent Assembly, the island of Martinique was in a state of turmoil. There was open war between the whites and the blacks. Tascher, the uncle of Joséphine, who was commandant of the port at Fort-Royal, was elected mayor; there was a collision at Saint-Pierre between the two parties, and fifteen blacks were killed. The garrison of Fort Bourbon revolted, and Tascher was made a prisoner by the rebels. The governor was compelled to evacuate, not only the capital, but also the forts which defended it. Complete anarchy reigned on the island.

Joséphine was advised by her friends to leave, and she sailed for France on the 4 September 1790 on the frigate *Sensible*. Her departure was so hasty that she sailed almost without any changes of clothing, and during the voyage was thrown upon the charity of the officers of the ship for toilet necessities for herself and Hortense. She landed in France early in November, and went directly to Paris, where she lodged at the Hôtel des Asturies, Rue d'Anjou.

At this time Joséphine seems to have made another

effort to bring about a reconciliation with her husband, but without success. Alexandre continued to live at the hôtel of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, and Joséphine took an apartment in the Rue Saint-Dominique.

The summer of 1791, Joséphine and her children were with the marquis and Madame Renaudin at Fontainebleau. Here she learned of the election of her husband as president of the Assembly, on the 18 June. Two days later occurred the flight of the royal family to Varennes. The announcement was made by Beauharnais, in opening the session of Tuesday the 21 June, and the Assembly remained in permanent session until the afternoon of the following Sunday. During this period Alexandre, by force of circumstances, was the personage the most *en vue* in France, the head of all authority. The King was suspended, and the President of the National Assembly, for the moment, was sovereign. When his son Eugène was seen in the streets of Fontainebleau, the people cried: "Voilà le Dauphin!"

It was a strange turn of the wheel of fortune which thus brought face to face the Marquis de Bouillé, the distinguished soldier of the Antilles, the last royal governor, who arranged the flight to Varennes, and this Beauharnais, who a few years before had vainly solicited the favor of being his aide de camp. One had been a valiant soldier, whose life had been devoted to his king and country: the other had never seen any active service, and his brief existence, up to the present time, had been a mixture of scandal and futility. In this encounter, by the irony of fate, it was the veteran who lost, and the carpet-knight who won.

The last of September the Constituent Assembly

came to an end. As the retiring deputies, by an act of rare and imbecile disinterestedness, had declared themselves ineligible for election to the new Legislative Assembly, they were all forced to retire to private life. Alexandre set out at once for Loir-et-Cher, where he was named member of the administration of the department. At this time he bought some national property in the vicinity of Ferté-Beauharnais, of which he seemed to consider himself the sole owner since the emigration of his brother. But the exercise of his new civil duties was brief. Since the 25 August he had been on the rolls of the general staff, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and early in December he received an order to join the 21st division to which he was attached.

The former president of the Assembly certainly took his time about entering upon his military duties, for he remained in the country until the last of January, and then came to Paris, where he devoted another month to arranging his affairs. At this time he was successful in securing a pension of 10,000 livres for his aged father. Finally he set out for the headquarters at Valenciennes.

When hostilities began in April he was attached to the Third Corps, commanded by Maréchal de Rochambeau in person. He took part in the first operations, and personally sent to the Military Committee of the Assembly an account of the rout at Mons.

For such distinguished services, Alexandre was promoted the last of May and assigned to the Army of the North under Maréchal Lückner. He continued to correspond with the Assembly, to describe the smallest skirmishes, and to give his impressions of events. He

was one of the first to accept the revolution of the 10 August, and was rewarded on the 7 September by being promoted to major-general and named chief of staff of the new army in course of formation at Strasbourg.

The year 1792 came to an end without the Army of the Rhine making any forward movement. During the first months of the following year, Beauharnais was still in Strasbourg, or that vicinity: his name occurs in no reports. The 8 March he was promoted to be lieutenant-general; and on the 13 May, when Custine was made commander of the Army of the North, Beauharnais succeeded him as general-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine.

In June, after the fall of the Girondins, Alexandre was summoned to Paris, to succeed Bouchotte as Minister of War. This nomination displeased the all-powerful Commune of Paris, which denounced Beauharnais as an aristocrat, and he wisely declined the appointment.

By this time the public was beginning to realize that General Beauharnais was more fond of writing than of acting. Mayence was besieged, and the commander of the Army of the Rhine had something more important to do than to compose addresses. The last of June he finally set his 60,000 men in motion, and advanced on the enemy. As usual, he reported in the greatest detail the slightest skirmishes, but did nothing to effect the relief of Mayence, which after a brave defence was forced to capitulate on the 23 July. He then insulted the heroic defenders of the city by a proclamation to his army, in which he said: " No one could expect a surrender so long as the Republicans had any ammunition

or bread." At the same time he wrote the Jacobins of Strasbourg that the club ought to demand of the Convention the heads of the traitors of Mayence and send them to the King of Prussia!

He then ordered his army to retreat to the lines of Wissembourg, and sent in his resignation, on the ground that, as a member of a proscribed caste, it was his duty to remove any subject of disquietude from the minds of his fellow-citizens. Without any authorization, he left his army and went to Strasbourg. It was a grave error thus to abandon his post in the face of the enemy, at a moment when Custine was on trial, Dillon under arrest, and all the generals of noble birth subject to suspicion.

On the 21 August, his resignation was accepted, in terms which for all time must cover his name with opprobrium. He was ordered to retire at once to a distance of fifty miles from the frontier, to a place of residence of which he would inform the Convention. So ended the inglorious military career of Alexandre de Beauharnais.

From October 1791 to September 1793, except for visits to her aunt at Fontainebleau, Joséphine passed all her time in her Paris apartment. Then, on account of the new law regarding "suspects," she found it desirable to have a domicile outside the city, in order to obtain a certificate of *civisme* (good citizenship). For some unknown reason, instead of using Fontainebleau, she decided upon Croissy, a village on the Seine about ten miles from Versailles. Here she sub-leased a house from Madame Hosten, a Creole friend from Sainte-

Lucie, who lived at Paris in the same hôtel, Rue Saint-Dominique. She had a daughter of about the same age as Hortense, and the mothers had become intimate friends. The 26 September 1793, the Citoyenne Beauharnais presented herself at the municipality of Croissy to make her declaration, and two days later she was joined by her son Eugène, who came from his school at Strasbourg. In her declaration there is no mention of Hortense, but this was probably only an oversight. Mlle. de Vergennes, who passed this summer of 1793 at Croissy, states that it was then that she made the acquaintance of Hortense, who was three or four years younger than herself. At this time, Joséphine, to prove her civisme, placed Hortense with her old nurse Marie Lanoy at Paris, as an apprentice to learn dress-making, and Eugène was articled to one Cochard, a carpenter, who was the national agent of the commune of Croissy.

This attack of civic fever, however, did not prevent Joséphine from seeking society, and extending her acquaintance among the residents of Croissy. Among the friends she made at this time were: Chanorier, through whom she afterwards bought Malmaison; Mlle. de Vergennes, who as Madame de Rémusat was to be her dame du palais; and Réal, who was to become Councillor of State, commandant of the Légion d'honneur, comte of the Empire.

During the month of January 1794, armed with her certificate of civisme, Joséphine returned to her apartment in Paris.

Leaving Strasbourg so precipitately that he had not time to take with him his carriages and horses, Alex-

andre proceeded directly to his home at Ferté. From there he made haste to write the Jacobin Club of Blois to announce his early visit. On his first appearance, however, he was greeted with insults. He made a spirited reply, and thought that he had saved the situation. Reassured, he leased a small house in the city, and endeavored to gain the good will of his neighbors. At the same time he opened correspondence with his wife: in the face of their common peril, a kind of intimacy was established between them. In the meanwhile he was elected mayor of the little commune of Ferté.

But Alexandre was not to enjoy very long his quiet life in the country. On the 2 March 1794, by order of the Committee of General Security, he was arrested, and conducted to Paris, where, on the 14 March, he was confined in the Carmes. On the 19 April, by order of the same Committee, Joséphine was also arrested, at Croissy, taken to Paris, and placed in the same prison. The old convent of the church of Saint-Joseph des Carmes, its walls still stained with the blood of the September Massacres, is standing to-day in the Rue Vaugirard close by the Luxembourg and the Odéon. At that time, it was one of the most insanitary prisons of Paris. It was cold, damp, dirty; infested with vermin; poorly ventilated, and badly lighted.

However, the society was excellent, although rather mixed. Grands seigneurs and grandes dames were mingled promiscuously with domestics and artisans.

There Joséphine was thrown again with her husband, and there seems to have been a good understanding between them, but nothing more. Alexandre conceived a great passion for Delphine de Custine, while José-

phine engaged in a violent flirtation with General Hoche, who entered the Carmes at about the same time.

Every possible effort was made by Alexandre and Joséphine to secure their liberty. Through Eugène and Hortense, who were allowed to visit their mother, communication was kept up with the outside world. Joséphine's surly pug dog, Fortuné, which was not noticed in the crowd, carried letters placed under her collar.

The case against Alexandre, however, was too strong for him to hope for acquittal: his military career, his neglect to relieve Mayence, his desertion of his post, made a record hard to defend. On the 22 July, he was taken to the Conciergerie. Realizing that it was the end, as he passed Madame de Custine, he handed her as a farewell present an Arab talisman mounted in a ring which he always wore on his finger.

Alexandre faced death bravely. In those days, if few knew how to live, all knew how to die. Without trial, without testimony, without pleadings, without verdict, he was hurried to the guillotine in a batch of fifty-five victims.

It was the 5 Thermidor. *Four days more!*

CHAPTER FOUR

1794–1795

AFTER THE TERROR

Paris During the Terror — The Fall of Robespierre — Joy of the Prisoners — Joséphine Set Free — Her Behavior in Prison — She Returns to Croissy — Her Relations with Hoche — Her Financial Difficulties — Her Banker, Emmery — Her Love of Luxury — Her Intimacy with Madame Tallien — Their Similar Tastes — Thérésia Abandons Tallien — Joséphine's New Home — She Places Her Children in School — Paul Barras — His Political Prominence — His Liaison with Joséphine — His Court at the Luxembourg

NO words can depict the conditions in Paris during the " Great Terror," which began in March 1794, and ended with the fall of Robespierre on the 27 July. The Law of the Suspects kept the prisons packed; the guillotine was constantly employed: the whole nation appeared doomed to the scaffold. The final seven weeks between the 23 Prairial (11 June) and the 9 Thermidor were horrible. It was nothing more nor less than a massacre: in the course of these forty-five days 1376 heads fell in Paris. " Fear was on every side; drawing-rooms were empty; wine shops were deserted; the very courtesans ceased to go to the Palais-Royal, where virtue now reigned supreme. The Convention was well-nigh deserted; the deputies had given up sleeping at home."

When the head of Robespierre fell under the guillotine, a mighty shout of joy went up from the one hundred thousand beings massed in the Place de la Révolution. In the popular estimation, Robespierre had

been the incarnation of the Terror, therefore his downfall meant the end of the Terror. No such thought had been in the minds of Barras and Tallien when they struck down the dictator, but they were not slow to take advantage of this reaction in public opinion.

The joy of the populace, however, was nothing in comparison with the delight of the reprieved prisoners who had been hopelessly awaiting death. The daily roll-call had ceased: it was never to be heard again. While the tumbrils conveyed to the scaffold the dreaded instruments of the Terror — Fouquier and the judges and jurymen, the former captives were daily set free. At the same time a hundred thousand "suspects" issued from their hiding places. Their joy was beyond words: "It was as if they had risen from the tomb, or been born into life again."

Joséphine was one of the first of the prisoners to gain her liberty: ten days after the fall of Robespierre, on the 19 Thermidor (6 August), she left the Carmes. One of her companions in misfortune has drawn a sketch of her behavior in prison which is not wholly flattering: "She was pusillanimous in the highest degree. . . . She passed her time in telling her fortune with cards, and in weeping in public, to the great scandal of her companions. But she was naturally affable, and does not this trait make us oblivious to many qualities which are lacking? Her *tournure*, her manners, her voice above all, had a particular charm; but it must be admitted that she was neither magnanimous nor frank; the other prisoners pitied her for her lack of courage."

Nevertheless, Joséphine was very popular: "When the prisoners heard her name pronounced, they applauded furiously." With that grace which never left her, "she made her adieux to each one, and left amidst

the good wishes and blessings of all." It has been stated that she owed her prompt liberation to Madame de Fontenoy, the future Madame Tallien, " her companion in prison," but Thérésia was confined in La Force and not at the Carmes. Joséphine had other friends, however, who were not less powerful: Hoche, who left his prison on the 4 August, Réal, Barrère, Tallien — to mention only a few of the names. Tallien himself always claimed the honor, and to him Eugène gave the credit at a later date.

But very little is known of the life of Joséphine during the twelve months following her release from prison. As the seals were still attached to her apartment in the Rue Saint-Dominique, she probably passed the autumn of 1794 in her house at Croissy. Barras states in his *Mémoires* that on leaving the Carmes she became the mistress of Hoche. If so, the liaison must have been very brief. Hoche was transferred to the Conciergerie the middle of May, and was set free only two days before Joséphine. Twelve days later he was appointed general-in-chief of the Army of the Côtes de Cherbourg, and left Paris to take up his new command not later than the first of September. At this time he seems to have been very much in love with his young wife, from whom he had been separated almost immediately after their marriage in February, by being ordered to the Army of Italy, and later by his imprisonment. Admitting that he carried on a lively flirtation with Joséphine during the few weeks that they were thrown together in the Carmes, it seems much more probable that Hoche passed with his bride the short period that he was in Paris at this time.

Futhermore, it is absurd to attempt to draw any conclusions as to this liaison from the fact that Hoche gave Eugène a position on his staff. The general had been in close relations with Alexandre in the army, and these ties had been drawn closer by their confinement in the same prison. What then could be more natural, than the wish of Hoche to relieve the burden of his friend's widow by assuming the responsibility of her son? This also is his own explanation of the matter in a letter written to the marquis two years later, after the second marriage of Joséphine.

There is no doubt, however, that during these twelve months Joséphine was in great financial difficulties. She had on her hands the lease both of her Paris apartment and the house at Croissy. Her father had left his affairs in great confusion, and the difficulty of getting money from Martinique was further increased by the war with England. In February 1794 the English had taken possession of the island, and the Tascher estate was in the hands of the enemy. In France the property of her husband had been confiscated by the Government.

The expenses of Joséphine's household at this time were quite heavy. She had three domestics: the nurse, Marie Lanoy; the maid, Agathe Rible; and the valet (*officieux*), Gontier. She not only paid them no wages, however, but even borrowed their little savings. Her principal resource was a M. Emmery, a banker at Dunkerque, who for many years had had business relations with the Taschers.

This Emmery had been colonel of the National Guard, deputy to the Legislative Assembly, and mayor of Dunkerque. During the Terror he was imprisoned,

and only a serious illness saved him from the guillotine. In the Year Three (1794–5) he was again elected mayor, and resumed his commerce with the Antilles. For a period of three years he had advanced to Joséphine the funds of which she had need.

On the first day of January 1795, Joséphine writes her mother that without the aid of her friend Emmery she does not know what would have become of her. She urges Madame Tascher to remit to her, either through London or Hambourg, all the funds at her disposal, not merely the income, but also the capital sum. Her mother seems to have done her best, but the remittance was only moderate in amount. Joséphine then drew on her mother a sight draft for one thousand pounds sterling, writing her at the same time, how important it was for her to meet the draft, as the money was due to friends who had already advanced it to her. In the meantime she succeeded in having the seals removed from her apartment, and recovered possession of her effects. She also managed to have turned over to her the silver and books left by Alexandre in his country house, and was paid by the Government the sum of ten thousand livres on account of the furniture which had been sold.

From these few details it is possible to judge how precarious was the life of Joséphine during the greater part of this year. But with the small remittances she received from Martinique, with money which she borrowed on every side, with bills which she contracted everywhere, she somehow managed to exist; and her life was far from being devoid of luxury. She was not a woman to walk, and must have a carriage, which she

hired by the month. She had not yet worked out the combination by which she obtained, in June 1795, from the Committee of Public Safety, a carriage and two horses in exchange for the horses and equipages which Alexandre had left with the Army of the Rhine. She was fond of flowers, and could not live without them. Her toilettes, which were quite modest, included such items as a piece of muslin at 500 livres, two pairs of silk stockings at 700 livres, and a shawl at 1200 livres. But let not the reader be amazed at these figures: a thousand livres assignats then represented only about fifty-three livres in gold.

At this time Joséphine was on very intimate terms with Madame Tallien, the most beautiful woman of her day. Thérésia was the daughter of Francis Cabarrus, a famous banker and finance minister of Spain. In 1788, at the age of fourteen, she was married to the elderly Comte de Fontenoy, a councillor of the Parlement of Bordeaux. During the early days of the Revolution, her wit and beauty made her a favorite in the salons of Paris. Later she attempted with her husband to join her father in Spain, but they were arrested at Bordeaux as suspects. At that time Tallien was exercising all the rigors of the Terror in the department of the Gironde. He thus met Thérésia, fell in love with her, and released Fontenoy on condition that he should apply for a divorce. She then became at first the mistress and later the wife of the proconsul. After the Reign of Terror, and the dictatorship of Robespierre, the woman-hater, the new régime found its incarnation in this woman of easy morals! It is a curious fact that, after her divorce by Tallien in 1802, she married Prince de Chimay, and

became the mother of a son who espoused Émilie, the daughter of Napoleon and the lovely Madame Pellapra. She was, so far as known, the only daughter of the Emperor.

There were many points of resemblance between Joséphine and Thérésia. Both had the same tastes, the same desires, the same love of luxury. Neither of them had any moral scruples, and they were both looking for some one rich enough to satisfy their caprices — husband or lover, it mattered little which. Thérésia, who was only twenty years of age at this time, had the advantage over Joséphine both of youth and beauty, but in grace and charm she could not be compared with the fascinating Creole.

Thérésia was not a woman to be satisfied long with a man like Tallien. She soon found their " Chaumière," in the Allée des Veuves, too small a theatre for her talents. Nothing would satisfy her but the rarest flowers, the most exquisite wines, and toilettes which did not cost less from the fact that they were most diaphanous. From Tallien she passed to Barras, who soon turned her over to the rich banker Ouvrard, " tout en conservant les privautés qui lui conviennent.

In August 1795, when her affairs were still in the same precarious condition, Joséphine leased from Julie Carreau, the wife of the actor Talma, from whom she was separated, a little hôtel *entre cour et jardin* at Number 6, Rue Chantereine. This was a short street recently laid out from the Faubourg Montmartre to the Chaussée-d'Antin. It was lined with the residences of *filles entretenues*. The lease was for three years, with

privilege of two renewals, and the rent was 10,000 francs in assignats.

The entrance to the hôtel was by a porte-cochère through a long corridor, at the end of which was a little garden, with two small pavilions which contained the stable and carriage-house. In the middle was the house, consisting only of a *rez-de-chaussée* with an attic above and cellar below. There were five rooms: an antechamber, a bedroom, a salon, which also served as a dining-room, another small salon, used as a boudoir, and a wardrobe. The servants' quarters were in the attic. Although small, the house demanded quite a staff of servants: a porter, a coachman, a chef, and a femme de chambre. Joséphine at this time set-up her carriage, with two horses: the same which she had obtained from the Government.

Before taking possession of her new home Joséphine had spent a very considerable amount in repairing and adding to the furniture of her apartment in Rue Saint-Dominique. Nothing, however, was very luxurious. The salon was furnished only with a round mahogany table, and four chairs covered with black horse-hair. On the walls were hung a few prints framed in dark wood.

It is interesting to note in passing that this short street, or rather the locality where it was afterwards laid out, was originally known under the name of *la Victoire*. Later the place was called Chantereine on account of the frogs which chanted there. After the Campaign of Italy it was again called Rue de la Victoire in honor of Napoleon, and is still known by that name to-day.

At this time, the nurse Marie Lanoy was no longer with Joséphine, as she had placed Hortense in the new school which Madame Campan had just founded at Saint-Germain. She also sent for Eugène, whom Hoche would have been only too glad to keep on his staff, and placed him in quite an expensive institution which had just been opened at Saint-Germain under the name of the Collège Irlandais.

The overthrow of Robespierre on the 9 Thermidor was due largely to Barras, and for the next two years he was perhaps the most prominent man in France. For power in itself he cared but little, but he greatly enjoyed the advantages derived from it: the money, the luxury, and above all the women.

Paul Barras was born in Provence in 1755 of a good family. In his youth he served as a lieutenant against the British in India. In 1789 he was chosen a member of the States-General, and took an active part in the storming of the Bastille and the Tuileries. The siege of Toulon owed its success largely to his activity and energy. After the 9 Thermidor, as president of the Convention he acted with decision both against the intrigues of the Royalists and the excesses of the Jacobins. He was brave, he was a gentleman, and with much reason he despised the rabble by whom he was surrounded. As Lefebvre said of Talleyrand: "He was a mess of filth in a silk stocking." But unlike Talleyrand he had courage, and, when occasion demanded, did not hesitate to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard.

It was a curious side of the nature of Barras that while he associated with the commonest of men, he

wished to have around him only women of the *Ancien Régime*. He must have, in his intimate relations, grace, elegance and distinction. He could not expect to find ladies of the highest rank: they had all emigrated or died on the scaffold; but he sought those who, to save their heads or their fortunes, had compromised themselves with the leaders of the popular party, and who with the return of luxury were ready to do anything to satisfy their caprices. He had not money enough to meet their demands from his own resources, but he put them in contact with bankers and contractors whom he exploited himself, and whom he permitted them to exploit in turn.

Among this galaxy of pretty women of loose morals the bright particular stars were Thérésia and Joséphine. Some one must have paid for the new luxury of Joséphine, and there is little doubt that Barras was at this time her lover. He is ungallant enough to say so in his *Mémoires,* and for once he seems to have told the truth.

As president of the Convention, member of the Committee of General Security, general-in-chief of the Army of the Interior, Barras was really more powerful then than later as a member of the Directory. In July 1795 he returned from a mission to the North; on the 13 Vendémiaire (5 October) he commanded the troops of the Convention; on the first of November he became a Director; and on the fourth he installed himself at the Luxembourg.

There is a remarkable coincidence between these dates and the events in the life of Joséphine. On the 17 August she signed her lease for the Hôtel Chantereine; the following month she sent her children to school; the

second of October she moved into her new home; and the sixth she gave the orders to furnish luxuriously her chambre à coucher.

By midsummer the liaison was already well established, and during the autumn they met frequently at Croissy. "We had Madame de Beauharnais for a neighbor," writes Pasquier. "Her house adjoined our own. She only came there occasionally, once a week, to meet Barras with the many persons who followed in his suite. . . . As is not rare with Creoles, the house of Madame de Beauharnais had an air of luxury while the most essential things were lacking. Chicken, game, rare fruits, filled the kitchen, while they came to our humble abode to borrow the kitchen utensils, plates and glasses which they lacked."

On the 4 November 1795 the newly elected Directors took possession of the Luxembourg, which had been assigned them as an official residence. The palace had been used as a prison during the Revolution, and all of the furniture had mysteriously disappeared. There was no one to receive them except the concierge, who loaned them for their first meeting a dilapidated table and some cane-bottomed chairs. As soon as the salons were refurnished and Barras began to hold his "Court," Joséphine and Thérésia were among the first to appear. This Court was made up of women of the old noblesse, and there reigned, in spite of assertions to the contrary, a very good tone: a certain cold reserve, rather than the *abandon* of bad taste. The ladies were nearly all widows, and very few husbands were to be seen.

Besides the Luxembourg, and her house at Croissy, Joséphine also met Barras at a house which he owned

or leased at Chaillot, as is shown by a letter still in existence:

"The Citoyenne Beauharnais invites the Citoyen Réal to give her the pleasure of his company for dinner *chez elle* (at her home) to-morrow the twenty-fifth: the Citoyens Barras and Tallien are to be present."

This letter is dated the 24 Pluviôse An IV (13 February 1796) and is written from the residence of Barras at Chaillot!

CHAPTER FIVE

1796

THE CITIZENESS BONAPARTE

The 13 Vendémiaire — The Parisians Disarmed — Eugène Reclaims His Father's Sword — Joséphine Meets General Bonaparte — Her Appearance at That Time — She Writes the General — One of His Love Letters — He Decides on Marriage — Joséphine's Hesitation — Her Final Consent — The Contract — The Civil Ceremony — Bonaparte Leaves for Italy

IN October 1795 there was a revolt of the Sections of Paris against the new Constitution, and above all against the new "Law of Two-Thirds," by which the members of the Convention had sought to secure the election of two-thirds of their number to the new Corps Législatif. Barras was placed in command of the troops of the Convention, and he appointed as his aide de camp, or chief of staff, a young artillery officer named Napoleon Bonaparte, who had distinguished himself at the siege of Toulon. Bonaparte easily put down the uprising, and the Convention showed its gratitude: he was named général en second of the Army of the Interior, 8 October; promoted general of division, 16 October; and succeeded Barras as general-in-chief of the Army of the Interior on the 26 October.

The day of the insurrection, the 13 Vendémiaire (5 October), and the following day, Joséphine was at Fontainebleau, where she had gone to select some furniture to be sent to her new house in Paris. A week

after her return she was notified of the order of the Committee of Public Safety that all citizens of Paris must surrender the arms in their possession. This seems to have been a matter of indifference to her, but Eugène, who was at home, protested warmly against giving up his father's sword. The commissioner consented to let him keep it if he secured the authorization of the general-in-chief. Eugène immediately went to the headquarters of General Bonaparte in the Rue des Capucines to make his request. The profound emotion which he displayed; his name; his pleasant face and manners; the warmth with which he made his plea — all touched the general, who gave him permission to keep the sabre.

Naturally the mother of Eugène came to express her thanks, as was only polite. Thus chance brought together General Bonaparte and the former Vicomtesse de Beauharnais. With Napoleon it was a case of love at first sight. His heart, his mind, his imagination — all were taken by storm. She was a lady, a *grande dame*, a ci-devant vicomtesse, the widow of a president of the Constituent Assembly, of a general-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine. All this meant much to Bonaparte: the title, the social position, the noble air with which she expressed her gratitude. For the first time the young Corsican found himself in the presence of a real lady of high society. He was invited to call on her some evening when he was free, and the next night he rung at the porte-cochère of the little hôtel in the Rue Chantereine.

When Joséphine met Napoleon about the middle of October 1795, she was already more than thirty-two years old — a mature age for a Creole. Her hair, which

was not thick, but fine in quality, was of a dark chestnut color. Her complexion was brunette. Her skin was already wrinkled, but so covered with powder and rouge that the fact was not apparent under a subdued light. Her teeth were bad, but no one ever saw them. Her very small mouth was never more than slightly opened, in a sweet smile which accorded perfectly with the infinite softness of her eyes with their long eyelashes, with the tender expression of her features, with the touching quality of her voice. And with that, "un petit nez fringant, léger, mobile, aux narines perpétuellement battantes, un nez un peu relevé du bout, engageant et fripon, qui provoque le désir."

Her head however could not be mentioned in comparison with her form, so free and so svelte, without a sign of embonpoint. She wore no corset, not even a *brassière,* to sustain her breast, which was low and flat.

Lucien writes in his *Mémoires* that she had very little wit, and no trace of what could be called beauty, but there were certain Creole characteristics in the pliant undulations of her figure, which was rather below the average height.

Arnault, in his *Souvenirs,* says that she had a charm which transcended the dazzling beauty of her two rivals, Mesdames Tallien and Récamier.

Madame de Rémusat describes her friend in these words: "Without being precisely beautiful, her whole person was possessed of a peculiar charm. . . . Her figure was perfect, every outline well rounded and graceful; every motion, easy and elegant. Her taste in dress was excellent. . . . Her education had been rather neglected, but she knew wherein she was wanting, and

never betrayed her ignorance. Naturally tactful, she found it easy to say agreeable things."

With all these qualities, the *femme* attracted Napoleon at their first meeting, while the *dame* impressed him by her air of dignity, as he put it: " Ce maintien calme et noble de l'ancienne société française."

The first call was quickly followed by another, and soon Bonaparte was a daily visitor at the little hôtel. Events moved rapidly in those days, and two weeks after the first visit Napoleon and Joséphine were already on most intimate terms. On the 28 October she writes him:

> You no longer come to see a friend who loves you; you have entirely neglected her: you are very wrong, for she is tenderly attached to you.
>
> Come to breakfast with me to-morrow; I must see you and talk with you about your interests.
>
> Good night, my friend, I embrace you.
>
> VEUVE BEAUHARNAIS

Henceforth Napoleon follows Joséphine everywhere. He accompanies her to, or meets her at, the houses that she frequents; he makes the acquaintance of Madame Tallien; as soon as the receptions begin at the Luxembourg he joins her there.

It is at this time that he writes her one of the first of his glowing love letters:

" I awake full of thoughts of thee. Thy image and the intoxicating evening of yesterday have left no repose to my senses. Sweet and incomparable Joséphine, what strange effect do you have upon my heart? If thou art displeased, or sad, or uneasy, my soul is overcome with grief, and there is no rest for thy friend; but it is en-

tirely different, when, yielding to the profound sentiment which masters me, I draw from thy lips, thy heart, a scorching flame. . . . I shall see thee in three hours. In the meantime, my dear love (*mio dolce amor*), a million kisses, but do not give me any, for they set my blood on fire."

On the 21 January, anniversary of the execution of "the last king of the French," Barras gives a large dinner. Among those present are Joséphine and Thérésia. Bonaparte's conversation is very animated, and he appears to interest the ladies greatly. After dinner they retire to one of the private salons, and the general sits on a sofa between Thérésia and Joséphine. The liaison seems to be generally recognized.

It is impossible to state at what date Napoleon conceived the idea of transforming "en mariage cette bonne fortune," but it was probably when his appointment to Italy was practically decided upon, and he knew that they must soon be separated.

For her part Joséphine hesitated for some weeks. In a letter to a friend she admits that she does not love Napoleon, but adds that her feeling towards him is one of indifference, rather than of dislike. She admires the General's courage, the vivacity of his mind, which enables him to grasp the thoughts of others almost before they have been expressed, but she is afraid of his domineering nature. She is also frightened by the force of his passion, which he expresses with an energy which leaves no room for doubt of his sincerity. Can she, a woman whose youth is past, hope to hold for any length of time this violent love which resembles a fit of delirium? Will he not later regret having failed to make a more advan-

tageous marriage, and reproach her with what he has done for her?

Joséphine consulted all of her society friends. They told her that Bonaparte had genius, and would go far; that it was no secret that Carnot intended to give him the command of the Army of Italy. Still she hesitated: she was nearly thirty-three years of age — almost an old woman; but what else could she do? She knew how uncertain was the attachment of Barras, how little trust she could place in him. She was tempted to accept this chance, perhaps the last she would ever have, and link her fortune to that of this brilliant youth, so ardent, and so passionate in his vows of eternal devotion.

This unexpected opportunity, this union with Bonaparte, who was to make true for her all and more than all that she could ever have dreamed, Joséphine was far from grasping at first. It was to be months and years before she fully realized her good fortune. Even after she understood what Napoleon meant to her, she never really appreciated the *man* — it was beyond her intelligence. She was fond of her position as the wife of the head of the State, but did she ever love Napoleon for himself?

On the 24 February Joséphine finally made up her mind. Only eleven days before, she had done the honors of the little house of Barras at Chaillot!

Nevertheless, she had precautions to take: above all to conceal her age, for she did not wish to admit the facts to this boy of twenty-six. She placed the matter in the hands of her man of confidence, Calmelet, who appeared before a notary and certified that "he knew

Marie-Josèphe Tascher, widow of the citizen Beauharnais; that she was a native of the island of Martinique, in the Windward Islands; and that, at this moment, it was impossible for him to procure her birth-certificate on account of the actual occupation of the island by the British." Armed with this declaration, Joséphine was able to state to the civil officer who performed the marriage that she was born on the 23 June 1766, while she was really born three years before.

The marriage contract was one of the most remarkable ever drawn up in France: no details of the bride's property were given; all that she possessed was to belong to the *communauté* which existed between her and the late M. de Beauharnais. For his part, Bonaparte did not hesitate to admit his lack of fortune. He stated that he had nothing except his wardrobe and his war equipment, upon which he placed a merely nominal value.

The contract was signed the 8 March 1796, and the marriage took place the following day, before a civil officer, who graciously gave the groom twenty-eight years instead of twenty-six, and the bride twenty-nine in place of thirty-two. This mayor, remarks a commentator, had a mania for *égalité!* The witnesses were Lemarrois, an aide de camp of the General, who was a minor; the inevitable Calmelet; Tallien and Barras! No mention was made of the consent of the parents: they had not been consulted.

Two days later Bonaparte was on his way to Italy, leaving his bride alone in the Hôtel Chantereine. " Heureusement on avait pris des avances sur la lune de miel."

CHAPTER SIX

1796

THE VICTORY FESTIVALS

Bonaparte en Route for Italy — His First Letter to Joséphine — Her Indifference — His Second Letter — Brilliant Opening of the Campaign — Bonaparte's Proclamation — He Writes Joséphine to Rejoin Him — Presentation of the Battle Flags — Description of Joséphine's Appearance — Victory of Lodi — The Fête Given by the Directory

FROM this time on, the life of Joséphine is so closely associated with that of Napoleon that it is impossible to speak of her without mentioning him.

Leaving Paris on the 11 March 1796, forty-eight hours after his marriage, Bonaparte set out for Italy, accompanied only by his aides de camp, Berthier, Duroc, Junot, Marmont and Murat, and his paymaster-general Chauvet, who carried with him 48,000 francs in gold — a small sum for the succor of an army which had long been destitute of everything.

En route Napoleon stopped a night with the father of Marmont at Châtillon-sur-Seine. Here he wrote Joséphine, enclosing a power of attorney to enable her to collect some money which was due him.

On the 14 March, at six o'clock in the evening, from the relay station at Chancéaux, he despatched his first long letter. He wrote:

"Every moment carries me further away from you, my dearest love, and every instant finds me with less

force to endure my separation from you. You are the constant object of my thoughts, and my imagination is exhausted in trying to conceive what you are doing. If I think that you are sad, my heart is torn, and my grief intensified; if you are gay, playful with your friends, I reproach you for having so soon forgotten the painful separation of three days. . . . As you see, I am not easy to satisfy; but, my dear love, it is very different if I fear that your health is altered, or that you have reasons for grief: then I regret the speed which carries me away from my heart. If I am asked if I have slept well, before replying I must have a courier to let me know that you have had a good night. . . . May my good angel, who has always protected me in the midst of the greatest dangers, surround and cover you, and leave me exposed. . . . Write me, my dearest love, and at length, and receive the thousand and one kisses of the most devoted and most faithful of lovers."

At this time Joséphine was very far from reciprocating the love of her husband. He adored her, while she was only moderately touched by his passion. His strange, violent character, inspired her with astonishment, rather than with sympathy. She was in her element in this brilliant, but bizarre society of the Directory, which tried to imitate the former splendors of Versailles. She enjoyed the opening of the few salons, where her grace and amiability caused her to be generally admired. She gave but few thoughts to this young Republican general, to whom Destiny had united her, who seemed to her more of an eccentric than a genius.

Napoleon turned from his route to pass two days with his mother at Marseille and hand her a letter from

Joséphine. His mother was not yet reconciled to his marriage, and it was only after a hard struggle, and a family council of war, that Madame Letitia was finally persuaded to write a very formal and stilted letter of congratulation to her new daughter-in-law.

A week later, the 29 March, Bonaparte arrived at Nice, and took command of the Army of Italy. During the opening days of this marvellous campaign, which was to render his name immortal, Napoleon was not so carried away with ambition as to be forgetful of his love. Before the first battle, he wrote Joséphine from Port-Maurice on the 3 April:

" I have received all your letters, but none of them has made such an impression on me as the last. What can be your idea, my adorable love, to write me in such terms? The sentiments that you express are like fire: they consume my poor heart! Do you not think that my position is already critical enough without increasing my regrets and upsetting my spirit? . . . My only Joséphine, away from you there is no joy; far from you, the world is a desert, where I am alone. You have taken away from me more than my soul; you are the one thought of my life. If I am weary with the burden of affairs, if I fear the outcome, if I am disgusted with men, if I am ready to curse life, I place my hand upon my heart: your portrait beats there; I regard it, and love is for me absolute happiness: all is gay except the space that I am separated from my love."

His whole soul in a state of ecstasy over the receipt of a few tender lines traced by the adored hand, he continues: " By what art have you been able to captivate all my faculties, to concentrate in yourself my moral

existence? To live for Joséphine is the whole aim of my life! I strive to be near you; I die to approach you. Fool! I did not realize that I was separating myself from you. How many lands, how many countries lie between us, how many days before you read these lines which are but feeble expressions of a troubled heart where you reign."

Unfortunately the sunshine of love is never long without its clouds, and Bonaparte, who was then in the seventh heaven of joy and confidence, was soon to become suspicious and jealous. Although he did not as yet doubt either the love or the fidelity of his wife, at times he was overcome with melancholy. But this feeling was not of long duration. The lover soon was lost in the man of action. Victory followed victory with amazing rapidity. From the heights of Monte-Zemolo the army suddenly saw at its feet the fertile plains of Italy, the promised land, with its splendid cities, its broad rivers, its cultivated fields. A shout of joy broke from the ranks. The young general, pointing to the scene of his coming triumphs, cried: " Hannibal scaled the Alps; we have turned them! "

After the armistice of Cherasco, on the 28 April, Bonaparte thus summed up in a few ringing words the achievements of his army:

" Soldiers! In two weeks you have gained six victories, captured twenty-one flags, fifty cannon, several strong places, and have conquered the richest part of Piedmont. You have made fifteen thousand prisoners, and killed or wounded ten thousand men. Destitute of all, you have supplied everything. You have gained battles without cannon, crossed rivers without bridges,

GENERAL BONAPARTE

made forced marches without shoes, often bivouacked without bread. Only Republican phalanxes are capable of deeds so extraordinary. Thanks to you, soldiers! "

On the 24 April Bonaparte sent his brother Joseph and his aide de camp Junot to Paris. Joseph was the bearer of a letter to Joséphine in which her husband strongly urged her to rejoin him in Italy. Junot carried the flags captured from the enemy, to be presented to the Directory.

In his *Mémoires* Joseph tells the story of their journey. They left in the same post-chaise, and reached Paris in five days after their departure from Nice. En route they were everywhere received with the greatest enthusiasm. At Paris the Directors expressed their satisfaction with the army and its commander.

Murat, who had been sent directly from Cherasco with the papers of the armistice, reached Paris before Joseph and Junot. Joséphine received from the three envoys the most circumstantial details of the success of her husband. Like Napoleon, she had passed in a few days from obscurity to glory. For the first time she began to realize that she had not made a mistake in marrying the young hero of Vendémiaire.

The *Moniteur* of the 10 May 1796 contains a report of the formal presentation of the flags to the Directory, by Junot, the future Duc d'Abrantès.

In her interesting *Mémoires* Madame d'Abrantès speaks of the impression created on this occasion by Madame Bonaparte and Madame Tallien who were present. " At that time," she says, " Madame Bonaparte was still charming, while Madame Tallien was in the full flower of her beauty." She continues: " One

may well believe that Junot was not a little proud to escort these two charming women when they left at the end of the reception. . . . He offered his arm to Madame Bonaparte, who, as the wife of his general, had the right to the first place, especially on this occasion; the other arm he gave to Madame Tallien, and so descended with them the staircase of the Luxembourg." There was an immense crowd outside the palace, and the people pushed and crowded to obtain a better view. There were cheers for General Bonaparte, and for his charming wife, who was acclaimed as " Notre-Dame-des-Victoires."

The poet Arnault, in his *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire,* recalls the profound impression made upon him so many years before by the loveliness of Joséphine on this occasion. He compares her with her two competitors for the sceptre of Venus: Madame Tallien and Madame Récamier. " Beside these two rivals," he says, " although she was not so brilliant or so fresh as they, thanks to the regularity of her features, the elegant *souplesse* of her figure, the sweet expression of her countenance, she also was beautiful. I can still see them, on this perfect May day, as they entered the salon where the Directors were to receive the flags. Each of them was attired in the toilette the best fitted to show off her particular advantages; their heads were crowned with the most beautiful flowers: one would have said that the three months of springtime had been reunited to fête the victory."

The same day that the flags were presented, the 10 May, Bonaparte gained the spectacular victory of Lodi, which made so vivid an impression on the popular

imagination. Carrying a banner in his hand, at the head of his grenadiers, the young general led the charge across the long and narrow bridge upon which the fire of the enemy was concentrated. From that time forth, his soldiers believed him infallible and irresistible. Five days later he made his triumphal entry into Milan.

The day after the battle of Lodi, Salicetti, the commissioner with the army, wrote the Directory: " Citizen Directors, immortal glory to the Army of Italy! Gratitude to the wisely audacious chief who directs it! The date of yesterday will be celebrated in the annals of history and of war. . . . When the Republican column was formed, General Bonaparte rushed along the ranks. His presence filled the soldiers with enthusiasm. He was received with cries a thousand times repeated of: ' Vive la République! ' He ordered the drums to beat the charge, and the troops, with the rapidity of lightning, rushed upon the bridge! "

To celebrate the new triumphs the Directory organized a fête, half patriotic, half mythological, which was celebrated on the Champ-de-Mars the 29 May. At ten o'clock in the morning a salvo of artillery announced the beginning of the ceremonies. The National Guard of Paris was present, under arms. Carnot, the president of the Directory, delivered the oration, which was in the nature of a martial rhapsody. He ended his discourse with a glowing tribute to the armies of the Republic and their valiant chiefs.

After the fête the people danced on the Champ-de-Mars until nightfall, and a grand dinner was given in the evening.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1796–1797

JOSEPHINE IN ITALY

Bonaparte Enters Milan — Joséphine's Life at Paris — She Finally Starts for Italy — Her Regret in Leaving — Arrival at Milan — The Palace Serbelloni — Her Ennui — Letter to Madame Renaudin — Her Delayed Honeymoon — End of the Campaign — Napoleon's Letters — The Court of Montebello — The Bonaparte Family Reunion — Joséphine's Aid to Napoleon's Policy — The Peace of Campo-Formio — Bonaparte Leaves for Rastadt — His Return to Paris

ON Sunday the 15 May 1796, Bonaparte made his entry into Milan through streets lined by the National Guard, commanded by the Duc de Serbelloni. When the general arrived at the Porta Romana the soldiers presented arms. Preceded by a large detachment of infantry, and surrounded by his guard of cavalry, he proceeded to the archducal palace, where he took up his residence. In the evening, there was a large dinner given in his honor, followed by a brilliant ball.

But in the midst of his triumphs, Bonaparte was far from happy. His adored wife failed to respond to his letters praying her to join him in Italy, and he had just received news of the proposal of the Directory to divide his forces, giving the northern army to Kellermann, while he was to be sent with the balance of the troops to conquer the southern part of the Peninsula. He im-

mediately wrote the Directory that he considered it most unwise to divide the Army of Italy into two parts, and against the best interests of the Republic to have two different generals. The majority of the Directory accepted his view of the situation and the order was at once cancelled.

Bonaparte found it more difficult, however, to overcome the resistance of his wife. Joséphine was more interested in enjoying at Paris the triumphs of her husband than in going to join him at Milan. She was perfectly happy in her life at home, and had no desire to leave her children and her friends. She loved the theatres, the manners of the Ancien Régime, which were beginning to reappear, and the receptions at the Luxembourg, where she was treated like a queen. It certainly was not customary, since the beginning of the wars of the Republic, to see the wives of the generals accompany the armies, and it was too much to demand of the Creole nature of Joséphine that she should rush to Italy at the first call of her husband, and expose herself to the fatigues and dangers of a great war.

But Napoleon could not understand her hesitation. He wrote her letter after letter, each one more burning and more pressing than the one before. Murat, who carried to Paris the papers of the armistice, was also the bearer of a letter to Joséphine urging her to rejoin him. This letter, which she did not hesitate to show to her friends, was characterized by the most violent passion, not entirely free from jealousy. Arnault writes: "I can still hear her reading a passage in which her husband cries, 'What are you doing? Why do you not come to me? If it is a lover who detains you beware of

the poinard of Othello! ' And Joséphine, smiling with amusement at his exalted sentiments, says with her funny Creole accent, ' Il est drôle, Bonaparte! ' "

In his *Life of Napoleon,* Sir Walter Scott writes that the correspondence of Bonaparte with Joséphine reveals the curious character of a man as ardent in love as in war: the language of the conqueror who disposed of States according to his good pleasure, and beat the most celebrated generals of his time, is as enthusiastic as that of an Arcadian shepherd. The statements of the great English writer are certainly borne out by the tone of the long passionate and eloquent letter which Napoleon wrote Joséphine on the 15 June 1796 from Tortona. It was despatched by a special courier, who had orders to remain only four hours in Paris, and to bring back her answer. Joséphine could not resist this final touching appeal; and she decided, although with great regret, to leave for Italy.

Her friend Arnault, in his interesting memoirs, gives us a curious insight of the feelings of Joséphine at this time. He says that the love which she inspired in a man so extraordinary as Bonaparte evidently flattered her, although she took the matter much less seriously than he; she was proud to see that he loved her almost as much as his glory; she enjoyed this fame which increased from day to day; but she wished to enjoy it at Paris, in the midst of the acclamations which hailed her appearance, on the receipt of each new bulletin from the Army of Italy. Her chagrin was great when she saw that there was no chance for further hesitation. She would not have exchanged her little hôtel in the Rue Chantereine for the palace prepared for her reception at

Milan — in fact, for all the palaces in the world. It was from the Luxembourg that she finally set out for Italy, after having supped there with a few friends. " Poor woman! " says Arnault, " she broke out in tears, and sobbed as if she were going to the scaffold. She was going to reign! "

Joséphine arrived at Milan the 9 July 1796, escorted by her brother-in-law Joseph, by Napoleon's aide de camp Junot, and by a young officer on the staff of General Leclerc, named Hippolyte Charles, whom we shall encounter later on in close connection with Joséphine.

Bonaparte, who had not expected so prompt a response to his last appeal, was absent on a tour of the principal cities of northern Italy. The first day of July he paid a visit to the Grand Duke Ferdinand at Florence. From there he went to Bologna and Verona, and did not reach Milan until the middle of the month.

What a change in the situation of Bonaparte in the four short months since he parted from Joséphine at Paris! In order not to excite the jealousy of the Directory he had abandoned the archducal palace, but was lodged in almost regal state in the Serbelloni Palace on the Corso Venezia, a few squares behind the cathedral. The Serbelloni is far handsomer than the Royal Palace and perhaps the most beautiful of all the palaces of Milan. Since the opening of the campaign in April his troops had overrun nearly all of northern Italy. Piedmont, delivered from the yoke of Austria, had made peace with France, and the remainder of the Imperial army was blockaded at Mantua. He had treated as an equal with the King of Sardinia, the Pope, the Duke of Modena, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, all

of whom owed to his generosity their political existence. Genoa and Venice, Rome and Naples, had all withdrawn from the coalition. The great cities of northern Italy had surrendered their most celebrated works of art to enrich the collections of the Louvre. Millions of francs had been levied on the different States, part of which had supplied his army, while the balance had been transmitted to Paris to fill the empty coffers of the Directory. What wonder that the name of Bonaparte was everywhere acclaimed!

Joséphine passed the summer at Milan, except for a short visit to headquarters before the battle of Castiglione. Having resumed the siege of Mantua after this victory, Napoleon went to Milan where he spent only twenty-four hours with his wife before rejoining his troops.

While Bonaparte was gaining his victories Joséphine was bored to death in Italy. The feeling of sadness which oppressed her is shown in a letter which she wrote at this time to her aunt Madame Renaudin, who had finally married her old lover the Marquis de Beauharnais. The Duc de Serbelloni who was going to Paris was charged with the delivery of this epistle which ran as follows:

" Monsieur Serbelloni will tell you, my dear aunt, of the manner in which I have been received in Italy. All the princes have given me fêtes, even the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the brother of the Emperor. Well, I prefer to be a simple private individual in France! I do not care for the honors of this country; I am much bored. It is true that my health contributes much to make me sad; I am often indisposed. If good fortune

could assure good health, I ought to be well. I have the most amiable husband that a woman could hope for. I have no chance to desire anything: my wishes are his. All day long he is in a position of adoration before me, as if I were a divinity. I could not have a better husband. He often writes my children of whom he is very fond. He is sending Hortense by M. Serbelloni a beautiful enamelled repeating-watch; to Eugène a handsome gold watch."

Comparatively few of the letters of Joséphine have been preserved for us, and this one is particularly interesting because it displays more appreciation of her husband's devotion than we should expect to find.

Ten days after the battle of Arcole, on the 27 November, Napoleon returned to Milan, where he expected to find Joséphine. Great was his surprise and disappointment to learn that she had accepted an invitation from Genoa to pay a visit to the city. There she was given a magnificent reception by the citizens who were favorable to the French.

On learning of Napoleon's arrival Joséphine returned at once to Milan, where they spent the month of December together at the Serbelloni Palace. It was really their " lune de miel," the first time that they had been united for more than a few hours since their marriage nine months before.

Lavalette, who had then just been appointed one of Bonaparte's aides de camp, gives us in his *Mémoires* an interesting picture of this kind of military court. He says: " The general-in-chief was then in all the intoxication of his marriage. Madame Bonaparte was charming, and all the cares of his command, all the tasks of

the government of Italy, did not prevent her husband from fully enjoying his domestic happiness. It was during this short sojourn at Milan that the young painter Gros made the first portrait that we have of the general. He represents him upon the bridge of Lodi at the moment that he seized the flag and called upon the troops to follow him. The artist could not obtain time for a sitting, so Madame Bonaparte took her husband upon her knees, after déjeuner, and kept him there for several minutes. I was present at three of these sittings: the age of the young couple, the modesty of the painter, and his enthusiasm for the hero excuse this familiarity."

With the beginning of the new year Austria resumed hostilities, and Bonaparte left Milan to take command of his army. On the 14 January he won the brilliant victory of Rivoli, and two days later that of La Favorita, which settled the fate of Mantua. Without waiting to receive the surrender of the fortress, he proceeded to Tolentino, where on the 19 February he concluded a treaty with the Pope. Two months later, at Leoben, he signed the preliminary articles of peace with Austria, which marked the end of the great Campaign of Italy.

During his absence from Joséphine, Napoleon as usual wrote her nearly every day. Madame de Rémusat, who is always reluctant to admit that Napoleon was ever more controlled by his heart than by his head, is neverthless struck by the passion revealed in every line of this correspondence. In her *Mémoires,* she says: " I have seen the letters of Napoleon to Madame Bonaparte at the time of the first campaign of Italy. . . . These letters are very singular: a writing almost illegible, a faulty spelling, a style bizarre and confused; but

withal, a tone so passionate, sentiments so strong, expressions so animated and at the same time so poetic, a love so apart from all other loves, that there is no woman who would not prize having received such letters."

As Milan is one of the hottest places in Italy, during his second summer Napoleon resided at the magnificent château of Montebello (or Mombello), which is situated on the old Como road a few miles from the city. It was then a great country villa sitting far back from the highroad in a large park with cool shady avenues, pretty fountains and all the exquisite loveliness of an Italian retreat. From the broad high terrace that ran around the front and the sides of the château, the Alps could be seen on one side and the beautiful spires of the Milan cathedral on the other.

Here most of the Bonaparte family were reunited for the first time since they left Corsica four years before. Madame Bonaparte came to secure Napoleon's approval of the marriage of his eldest sister Élisa to Félix Bacciochi, which had been celebrated at Marseille the first of May, and to persuade him to furnish a dot. Napoleon finally yielded to his mother's wishes, and at the same time informed her of a marriage which he had arranged between General Leclerc and his sister Pauline. The marriage was celebrated on the 14 June, with both civil and religious forms, by the express orders of Napoleon, and the civil union of Bacciochi and Élisa was blessed by the Church at the same time.

This family meeting was not prolonged. After a visit of two weeks Madame Letitia left for Corsica, accom-

panied by Élisa and her husband. At the same time Joseph set out for Rome, where he had just been made minister, taking with him his wife and his youngest sister, Caroline. Jérôme was sent back to college at Paris, and Pauline remained in Italy with Leclerc, who had been named chief of staff in the army.

The three months which Napoleon and Joséphine passed at Montebello were perhaps the happiest of their lives. The Conqueror of Italy lived in regal style, surrounded by his military court. The attention of Europe was more drawn to this château than to all the palaces of the emperors and kings. At Milan, as later at Paris, Joséphine admirably served the interests of her husband. By her antecedents, her relations, her character, she formed a connecting link between him and the old aristocracy: without her, by his own admission made later on, he never could have had any natural *rapport* with the old régime. The salon of the former Vicomtesse de Beauharnais recalled the traditions of the most brilliant circles of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Joséphine received the noble families of Milan with an exquisite grace, and there reigned a kind of etiquette which contrasted in a singular manner with the democratic air affected by the general.

On the 18 August Napoleon and Joséphine made a short excursion to Lake Maggiore, accompanied by Berthier and Miot. Immediately upon their return they set out for Udine where Napoleon was to meet the Austrian plenipotentiaries. On the 27 August they arrived at Passeriano where they took up their residence in a château still in existence which had formerly belonged to a doge of Venice. It was a fine country resi-

dence situated upon the left bank of the Tagliamento about ten miles from Udine.

The peace negotiations had dragged along through the summer and far into the autumn of 1797 mainly owing to the hope of the Emperor that events in France might turn to his advantage. The coup d'état of the 18 Fructidor (4 September) had destroyed the last hope of the Royalists, and Bonaparte's victorious army was still in Venetia ready to march on Vienna, so nothing remained except to conclude peace. The final treaty was signed on the 17 October: it bore the name of the Peace of Campo-Formio from a village situated halfway between Passeriano and Udine.

On the second day of November Napoleon and Joséphine were again back at Milan. Leaving his wife there, Bonaparte started two weeks later for Rastadt, travelling by way of Geneva, where he stopped for a day. He was accompanied by his aides de camp, Duroc, Lavalette and Marmont; his secretary, Bourrienne, and his physician, Yvan.

On the 25 November Bonaparte reached Rastadt, where he remained only long enough to exchange with the Austrian plenipotentiaries the ratification of the Treaty of Campo-Formio, and then left for Paris. He arrived home on the 5 December, and took up his residence in the little hôtel in the Rue Chantereine, from which he had set out twenty-one months before an obscure man, to which he returned as a celebrity. On the 29 December, by decree of the department of the Seine, the Rue Chantereine was changed in his honor to Rue de la Victoire.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1798–1799

THE PURCHASE OF MALMAISON

Joséphine Returns to Paris — The Talleyrand Fête — Purchase of the Hôtel Chantereine — Bonaparte's Tour of Inspection — His Sudden Return — Napoleon's Fortune — He Leaves for Toulon — The Fleet Sails — Joséphine at Plombières — She Buys Malmaison — Fortunes of the Bonapartes — Joséphine's Indiscretions — Napoleon Hears the Reports — His Liaison with Madame Fourès

JOSEPHINE finally reached Paris upon the second day of January. She took nearly six weeks for the journey, and did not seem to be in as great haste as she claimed in her letters, to leave that tiresome Italy, and see her beloved daughter again. After a visit to Turin, she crossed Mont-Cenis in terrible weather, and stopped several days at Lyon. The fête to Bonaparte, planned by Talleyrand, had to be put off from day to day, as the general wished his wife to be present.

Aside from the necessary calls on the Directors and ministers, during the month after his return Napoleon made only a few appearances in public. On the 10 December he attended the fête given in his honor by the Directors at the Luxembourg. Another evening he was present during one act of a play at the Français. The rest of the time he deliberately stayed at home and refused to receive the applause of the people which greeted him on every appearance.

The day after the arrival of Joséphine it was necessary for him to issue from his retirement to attend the fête arranged by Talleyrand. The Minister of Foreign Affairs then occupied the luxurious Hôtel Gallifet, in the Rue du Bac, which had been splendidly decorated for the occasion. At half past ten Bonaparte appeared, in civilian costume, accompanied by his wife, who wore a Greek tunique, with cameos in her hair. Somewhat embarrassed by the ovation he received, Napoleon took the arm of Arnault and made the tour of the salons. It was during this promenade that Madame de Staël forced herself upon his attention, and received, in answer to her impertinent questions, the celebrated reply which was to make of her his life-long enemy.

"General," she said, as soon as she had met him, "what woman do you love best?"

"My wife."

"Naturally; but whom do you esteem most?"

"That one who is the best housekeeper."

"Very true; but who do you think is the first among women?"

"Madame, the one who bears the most children."

There is little wonder that the conceited Madame de Staël did not love Napoleon after this brief passage at arms.

During the supper Bonaparte was seated beside his wife, to whom he was most attentive. At one o'clock they left the ball.

On her return from Italy Joséphine had settled again in her little hôtel of the Rue de la Victoire, upon which she had ordered extensive alterations made, at a cost of over one hundred thousand francs, although at the time

she still had only a lease. However, on the last day of March Bonaparte purchased the property for the sum of 52,000 francs. The house was soon full to overflowing with the many rare paintings and objets d'art which Joséphine had shipped from Italy. This was the beginning of the immense collection which later entirely filled her château of Malmaison.

In October, before his return from Italy, Bonaparte had been appointed general-in-chief of the Army of England. On the 4 February he left Paris for a twelve days' tour of inspection of the Channel ports from Calais to Ostende. On his return he reported to the Directory that the proposed invasion of England was a most dangerous and difficult undertaking, and, as an alternative plan, suggested an eastern expedition which would menace the British trade with the Indies. He had little difficulty in obtaining the consent of the Directory to the new plan, and on the 4 March the Government formally approved of the expedition to Egypt.

All the familiars of Joséphine stood in the greatest awe of Napoleon, but the moment he was absent the house was filled with the friends of the mistress of the mansion. As soon as Bonaparte left for his tour of the Channel ports, Joséphine seems to have renewed her intimacy with Barras. There is certainly ground for suspicion in the note she hastily scribbled to the secretary of the Director on the unexpected return of her husband: "Bonaparte arrived to-night. I beg you, my dear Bottot, to assure Barras of my regret that I cannot go to dinner with him. Tell him not to forget me. You know better than any one my position."

It was a notorious fact that most of the generals of

the Republic had not returned to Paris with empty hands, but Bonaparte pretended that he was different from the others. Later, at Saint Helena, he claimed that on his return from Italy his fortune did not exceed three hundred thousand francs, but it seems probable that he had nearer three millions. In addition, he had his salary of forty thousand francs as general-in-chief, and seven thousand francs a month while head of the French legation at Rastadt. During his absence in the East he left his funds in the hands of Joseph, as a common purse for the family, and it is well known that the Bonapartes did not suffer for lack of money while he was away. It is very possible that in his recollections Napoleon omitted a zero from his calculations.

On the 3 May 1798 Napoleon and Joséphine, after dining informally with Barras at the Luxembourg, went to the Théâtre-Français to see Talma in *Macbeth*. That evening the Conqueror of Italy was greeted with the same enthusiasm as during the first days of his return. After the play they went home, and at midnight set out for Toulon. Besides Joséphine, Napoleon had in the carriage with him his secretary, Bourrienne, and his aides de camp, Eugène, Duroc and Lavalette. To escape the vigilance of the English spies Napoleon had kept his plans entirely secret, and even forbade Joséphine to go to Saint-Germain to say adieu to Hortense.

Upon their arrival at Toulon, Bonaparte informed Joséphine for the first time that he did not intend to take her with him, as he did not wish to expose her to the dangers and fatigues of the voyage, and the severity of the climate. In vain she pleaded that the voyage had no terrors for her after three trips across the Atlantic,

and that the heat of Egypt could not affect a Creole. To console her, Bonaparte finally promised that, as soon as he was well established in Egypt, at the end of two months, he would send for her the frigate *Pomone,* under the convoy of which she had made her first voyage from Martinique to France.

Bonaparte knew that there was no time to be lost in setting sail, but the expedition was detained ten days by contrary winds. Although he was not then aware of the fact, on the second day of May Nelson had been detached from the fleet that was blockading Cadiz, to go in search of information regarding the preparations at Toulon. He arrived off that port on the 17 May, but was driven back by an adverse wind, and was not able to return until ten days after the departure of the French expedition. Never was Fortune more favorable to Napoleon! If the French fleet had encountered Nelson at any time during the long voyage of six weeks it had not more than one chance in a hundred of escaping absolute destruction.

The adieux of Bonaparte and Joséphine were very tender. The signal for departure was given, and before a strong north-west wind the fleet moved out of the port. Bonaparte was on the *Orient,* a vessel of one hundred and twenty guns, and from a balcony Joséphine with a glass followed her husband as long as the ship was in sight.

After the departure of the expedition Joséphine did not return directly to Paris, but went to Plombières in the Vosges to take the waters. While there she met with a serious accident: a wooden balcony, upon which she was standing with several friends, gave way under

them, and she fell fourteen feet to the pavement below. Fortunately no bones were broken, but she was painfully bruised. Hortense was sent for, at the school of Madame Campan, and nursed her mother during the convalescence. No sovereign was ever better cared for. Barras received the bulletins of her health drawn up by the resident physicians; all the authorities of the department called; musicians, brought from Epinal, gave her serenades; her rooms were filled with rare flowers.

At Plombières she received the first news of the expedition, from the capture of Malta to the occupation of Cairo. She also learned from Bonaparte's letters that she must give up the idea of sailing to rejoin him. The fleet of Nelson was in full command of the Mediterranean, and all the French ports were closed. The frigate upon which she was to have sailed had been captured by an English cruiser in leaving Toulon.

The last of August Joséphine was back in Paris. At this time she arranged to purchase the estate of Malmaison. The price is generally stated to have been 160,000 francs, " paid in part with her dot, and in part with the resources of her husband." As a matter of fact the deed which was passed before a notary of Paris the 21 April 1799 shows that the price agreed upon was 225,000 francs, with 37,500 francs additional for the furniture, and over 9000 francs for the recording fee. Joséphine only paid down in cash the amount of the furniture, 37,500 francs, with the avails of " diamonds and jewelry belonging to her." The balance was left unsettled.

From the funds deposited by Napoleon with Joseph

was drawn the money to pay for the princely estates bought about the same time by other members of the family. In Italy, Lucien purchased of a Roman princess an estate bringing in a revenue of 4000 francs a year; at Paris, a hôtel corner of the Rues du Mont-Blanc and de la Victoire; near Villers-Cotterets, a fine château, which with the farm of Soucy brought in over 17,000 francs a year. Joseph also acquired, at Paris, a new hôtel which cost him at the outset over 100,000 francs; and, near Senlis, the magnificent estate of Mortefontaine, with a vast park and one of the finest English gardens in Europe, for which he paid 258,000 francs. As the place had been much neglected during the Revolution, he was obliged to spend in its restoration another quarter of a million the first year. Truly, the modest three hundred thousand francs brought back from Italy by Napoleon went a long way!

At the same time Joséphine had much difficulty in obtaining from Joseph the payment of the small allowance of forty thousand francs fixed by Napoleon, and was very indignant over the way in which he disbursed her husband's money. With her magnificent jewels, her priceless paintings and objets d'art, she was actually short of money to meet her current bills.

In acting as he did, Joseph may have gone beyond his brother's orders; but the conduct of Joséphine since her return from Plombières had been anything but exemplary. She was again on very intimate terms with Barras, and her liaison with Hippolyte Charles, which had begun at Milan, was a matter of public notoriety. At Malmaison this young officer ruled almost as lord and master. Did Joséphine think, like many others, that

JOSEPHINE

Bonaparte would never return from the Orient, or did she imagine that Egypt was so far away that he would never hear of her conduct? If so, she was mistaken in both suppositions: he was to return, to give her a very *mauvais quart d'heure*, and the reports were to reach him in Egypt, through an indiscretion on the part of Junot. Both Bourrienne and Madame Junot have given us a vivid picture of Napoleon's rage and despair on this occasion. He cried: " I would give all the world to know that Junot's tale is false, so much do I love Joséphine. But if she is really guilty, a divorce must separate us forever. I will not submit to be the laughing-stock of all the imbeciles of Paris. I will write Joseph to have the divorce declared."

It is absurd to claim, as many historians have done, that Napoleon at the time of his marriage was ignorant of Joséphine's past life. He certainly must have known of her relations with Barras, at least; but the past did not concern him: all that he asked for was fidelity in the future. The nobleness of his character, and his understanding of the situation, are clearly shown in the letter he wrote her from Milan 11 June 1796: " Everything pleased me, even the remembrance of your errors and of the afflicting scene which took place two weeks before our marriage." His rights over her heart and mind only date from the hour that she accepted his love and freely gave him her hand: the past no longer counts. But from that moment she belongs to him, and if she deceives him, all is over. If Joséphine had been true to him, without doubt Napoleon would have remained faithful in Egypt as he had been in Italy.

At Cairo the favorite rendez-vous of the officers was

a garden modelled upon the Tivoli at Paris, which was kept by an old school-friend of Bonaparte at Brienne. Here Napoleon met a very pretty young woman with blond hair, a dazzling complexion, and beautiful teeth. Her name was Marguerite-Pauline Bellisle, and she was an apprentice to a modiste at Carcassonne when she married a young lieutenant in the chasseurs à cheval named Fourès. In the midst of their honeymoon came the command to embark for Egypt, with stringent orders that no wives were to accompany the expedition. Like several other devoted wives, the young woman donned one of her husband's uniforms and sailed on the same ship with him.

Either from virtue or calculation, Madame Fourès did not yield to the first attack. It required declarations, letters, handsome presents. Finally all was arranged.

The middle of December, Fourès received orders to leave for France, this time alone, as bearer of letters to the Directory. A mansion was hastily furnished, near the general's palace, and the young lady installed there. Unfortunately for the peace of the new *ménage* the vessel upon which Fourès took passage was captured by the English, who were well informed regarding events at Cairo, and were malicious enough to send him back to Egypt. He rushed to Cairo, and made a scene with his wife, who promptly secured a divorce.

Napoleon seems to have become very much in love with the little Bellisle, or *Bellilote* as she became known, and went so far as to offer to marry her after divorcing Joséphine, provided she gave him a child. "Mais quoi! la petite sotte n'en sait pas avoir," he said with humor. When he returned to France he ar-

ranged to have her follow him, but she in turn was captured by the English. When she finally reached Paris it was too late. Napoleon was reconciled with Joséphine, and the coup d'état of the 18 Brumaire had made him master of France. The Consul refused to see her, but made her a handsome allowance. She was afterwards married again, separated from her husband, and lived to the good old age of ninety-two years, dying in March 1869 during the last year of the Second Empire.

CHAPTER NINE

1799

THE RETURN OF BONAPARTE

Bonaparte Leaves Egypt — He Lands in France — Joséphine Fails to Meet Him — Their Reconciliation — His Generous Pardon — He Pays Her Debts — Her Rôle in the Coup d'État — She Invites Gohier to Déjeuner — The Two Days of Brumaire — Bonaparte, First Consul — They Move to the Luxembourg

AT midnight on Thursday the 22 August 1799 Bonaparte embarked at Alexandria on the frigate *Muiron,* which with three other smaller ships set sail at five o'clock in the morning. He was accompanied by Murat and Lannes, both recently wounded, as well as by Berthier, Bessières, Duroc, Lavalette and Marmont. He also took with him Eugène de Beauharnais, and his secretary, Bourrienne.

He had the same good fortune as on his outward voyage. The English fleet had gone to Cyprus for repairs and he slipped out unmolested. Contrary winds forced the little fleet to hug the African coast, and they only made three hundred miles in twenty days. The English ships cruising between Sicily and Cape Bon were eluded. Then the wind changed and better progress was made.

After a voyage of forty days Bonaparte entered the port of Ajaccio on the first of October. Here he was detained for a week by adverse winds. Finally, on the 7 October, he sailed for France. It was his last visit to his native island.

At noon on the 9 October Napoleon landed at Fréjus, and at six o'clock started for Paris. His journey was one long ovation. At every city through which he passed he was received with transports of enthusiasm. After a stop of half a day at Lyon, where he attended the theatre, at midnight he again set out, travelling in a post-chaise at great speed, not stopping by night or day. He reached Paris at six o'clock on the morning of the 16 October and went directly to his hôtel in the Rue de la Victoire, where, as upon his return from Italy, he found no one to receive him.

Joséphine was dining at the Luxembourg with Gohier, the president of the Directory, when the news was received of the unexpected landing of Bonaparte at Fréjus. She had almost forgotten that he existed, and seemed to think that he would never return. But there was no time now for hesitation: she immediately set out to meet her husband, and tell her story before he had a chance to see his brothers. She naturally took the usual route by Dijon and Mâcon, but Napoleon was travelling by way of the Bourbonnais, and she did not meet him. On her return to Paris, a few days later, Bonaparte locked his door and refused to see her. His brothers had taken advantage of her absence to tell Napoleon the story of her conduct, and he was fully resolved upon a divorce. For a whole day she knocked in vain, and cried and sobbed before the closed door. Finally, at the suggestion of her maid, she sent for Eugène and Hortense, who joined their supplications to those of their mother. The door at last was unlocked, and Bonaparte appeared with open arms, his eyes wet with tears, his face convulsed with the long and ter-

rible struggle which he had had with his heart. When his brothers appeared the next morning they found that all had been forgiven and forgotten.

Notwithstanding all of Joséphine's indiscretions Napoleon was wise to abandon the idea of a divorce, which would have interfered seriously with his plans. He did well to disregard the advice of his family, who had always disapproved of his marriage and done their best to bring about a rupture. During his absence, in spite of his orders to Joséphine not to mingle in public affairs, she had manœuvred like a skilled diplomatist, and had well prepared the way for his return. Although her relations with Barras had now ceased, she was on very cordial terms with her former admirer, as well as with Gohier, the new president of the Directory. Her salon was also frequented by Talleyrand, Fouché, Cambacérès, and many others whose support was essential to the success of his plans. It is possible that without the assistance of Joséphine, Napoleon might never have become emperor.

When Napoleon pardoned Joséphine, it was in no half-hearted way — it was a pardon generous and complete, an entire wiping out of all her errors. He had the remarkable faculty, when his confidence was renewed, of no longer remembering: of suppressing in his marvellous memory all recollections of faults which he did not wish to punish. Not only did he forgive his wife, but, a virtue even rarer, he disdained to punish her guilty accomplices, and never stood in the way of their advancement in life.

He was equally generous in the payment of the enormous debts contracted by Joséphine during his

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not fail, for there are some very interesting matters which I would like to talk over with you. Adieu, my dear Gohier. Believe me always your sincere friend

LAPAGERIE-BONAPARTE

But Gohier was alarmed over an invitation for so early an hour in the morning, and remained home, sending his wife in his place. While the stirring events of the morning were taking place, Joséphine used all of her charm to keep Madame Gohier at her house. The wife of the director finally succeeded in making her escape; and with some difficulty reached the Luxembourg, through the streets thronged with spectators and encumbered by the movements of the troops. As a profound secret, Joséphine had informed her visitor of the intention of Talleyrand to see Barras and demand his resignation. This information led Gohier to think that only Barras was to be eliminated, and from that moment he made no further efforts to oppose the plans of the conspirators. So this little plot did not entirely fail.

Late in the evening Bonaparte returned from the Tuileries to the Rue de la Victoire, and gave Joséphine a full account of the events of the day. The night passed quietly. Lannes guarded the Tuileries, and Moreau, the Luxembourg. The troops occupied all the strategic points of the capital. The theatres were crowded, as usual. Without, the rain fell in torrents, and the streets were practically deserted.

On Sunday morning, the 19 Brumaire, the air was clear and cool, after the storm of the night before. At dawn the troops began their march from Paris to Saint-Cloud, where the Councils were to meet at midday.

The " army of generals " gathered at Bonaparte's house to receive his final orders. He soon appeared upon the steps of the hôtel, in his uniform of general, wearing the little hat which was already legendary. Entering his carriage, with his aides de camp, he set out for Saint-Cloud, escorted by a small detachment of cavalry.

The day was long and tiresome, and for many hours the result was in doubt. It finally ended in the dissolution of the Directory, and the appointment of three temporary Consuls: Bonaparte, Sieyès and Ducos. It was after midnight before all the legislative work was finished, and the new Consuls took their oath of office.

" At three in the morning," writes Bourrienne, " I accompanied Bonaparte in his carriage to Paris. Extremely fatigued after so many trials, and absorbed in his reflections, he did not utter a single word during the journey. . . . Back in the little house in the Rue de la Victoire he kissed Joséphine, who was in bed, and told her all the incidents of the day. Then he rested for a few hours, and woke up in the morning, the master of Paris and of France."

The day following the 19 Brumaire, the 11 November by our calendar, was a décadi, or Republican day of rest. At ten o'clock in the morning, Bonaparte, dressed in civilian costume, left his house, and in a carriage, escorted only by six dragoons, proceeded to the Luxembourg, to join his two colleagues and set the new government in operation. During the course of the day Joséphine also left the little hôtel in the Rue de la Victoire, and moved across the Seine. In all but name, the " little Creole " was now sovereign of France!

CHAPTER TEN

1800

THE CONSULAR COURT

The Luxembourg — Important Rôle of Joséphine — Her Devotion to Napoleon — Secret of Her Power — Her Royalism — Assistance to the Émigrés — Importance to Napoleon's Policy — Marriage of Caroline and Murat — The Tuileries — Life There — The New Society — Visits to Malmaison — The Château — Napoleon at His Best

AT the Petit-Luxembourg Napoleon occupied the former apartment of Moulin on the ground floor, on the right as you enter from the Rue Vaugirard. His cabinet was near a private staircase which led to the first floor, where Joséphine was installed in the old quarters of Gohier. The dinner was served at five o'clock, and the table was always set for twenty persons. Joséphine did the honors with her usual grace. If Bonaparte was tired, or absorbed, and refused to talk, no one felt neglected. Since the rude shock which she had received on the return of Bonaparte, Joséphine had conducted herself with so much tact that she had entirely regained her former place in his esteem. She was no longer loved with the same blind devotion, but she had become a very important element in the new Consular Court. By nature and by experience she was admirably adapted to serve her husband's interests in rallying all parties and all factions to the support of the new government. The

NAPOLEON, FIRST CONSUL

nobles of the old régime who had frequented the hôtel in the Rue Chantereine, such as Caulaincourt, Just de Noailles and Ségur, began to encounter in her salon at the Luxembourg men of the Revolution like Monge, Réal and Cambacérès.

No one was received except upon a written invitation, and formal notice was served by Bonaparte that the dress, or rather undress, of the ladies who frequented the Court of the Directory, would no longer be tolerated. In the *Moniteur* appeared a report worded as follows:

"During the month of December past there was a large assembly at the Luxembourg. When every one was in the reception room, Bonaparte ordered the servants to make a large fire. He even repeated this order two or three times. When some one made the remark that it was impossible to put more wood in the fireplace, he said, 'That will do. I wanted a good fire because the cold is excessive, and *these ladies are nearly nude.*'" Advice to readers: decency is the order of the day; and decency in dress would bring in its train decency in morals.

For their trips to Malmaison, as for every other function in life, Joséphine has the rare faculty of being always ready, and ever submissive to her husband's orders. Her hours of rest, of meals, of every kind, are arranged so as not to interfere with his work. As soon as his task is finished, Joséphine is always ready, at any hour of day or night, to eat, to go out, to start on a journey without previous notice, in a costume which becomes her, and is suitable for the occasion. She has constantly on her lips the same smile, which always

seems natural, and never forced; her voice is ever soft and soothing, with her pretty Creole accent, which pleases the ear, and is like the caressing touch of a loving hand. To this man of thirty years, who has never known a home, who has always lived in an inn or a tent, she gives the delightful experience of a well-ordered and luxurious household, a touch of domestic life.

At this time Joséphine has no official rôle to play: she has no recognized place in the State; she is present on occasions of ceremony only as a distinguished guest, who looks on from window or balcony. She makes a point of seeming to exercise no influence over her husband, except in deeds of good-will. This is the real secret of her power, and she knows it. The day that she even attempted to direct his actions, her power would be lost. Bonaparte would tolerate no Pompadour, no Marie-Antoinette at his side. As for the rest, he cares little. She can have all the money she wants, to pay for her toilettes and her jewels, to settle her old debts; but political influence, never! Her indirect power, in the form of charity and social duties, receives his entire approbation, as it is directed to the same object which he himself is striving to attain.

In all her sentiments, Joséphine is a royalist, both from natural inclination and from reasons purely personal to herself. She has the most tender attachment to the name of the King, and the Ancien Régime. The reason is not hard to find. If Bonaparte plays the rôle of Monk and recalls the Bourbons, he will have at least the title of duc and peer, the dignity of marshal or constable of France, a great position at Court, and she will have the assurance of sharing his fortune and of never

being repudiated. "Indeed," remarks one of her historians, "how, in 1799, only seven years after the fall of the Throne, could Joséphine have any other ideas? What was there greater in ancient France, after the king — and no one then thought that he could become king, because one does not become king — what was there greater than duc and peer, maréchal de France? What was there higher than these dignities to which, in the most dizzy dream of ambition, a private individual could aspire?"

She does not suspect, she cannot imagine, that this new society demands a new form of government, that the man who is to accomplish this task has appeared on the scene, and that that man is her husband!

Bonaparte is by no means displeased with the royalist sympathies of his wife. He wishes to gain time in his negotiations with the rebels in the Vendée, to endeavor to rally them to his cause, and enlist them in his armies. For this reason he does not wish to break too abruptly with the Pretender, who has already made advances to him. He knows that the émigrés are only too anxious to return to France and recover at least a part of their property. Joséphine is practically the retained advocate of the Royalists and the Émigrés, and the favors which she solicits, and is accorded, one by one, are not calculated to excite the alarm of the purchasers of the national property, or arouse the wrath of the Jacobins. "Little by little this immense social force, lost for the France of the Revolution, will flow back from every part of Europe towards the France of the Consulate, and bring back, with the habits of courtesy and elegance, administrators for the departments, magistrates

for the superior courts, diplomats for the legations, officers for the troops, *causeurs* for the salons, personages for the Court. . . . Bonaparte feels that the glory of the past, represented by illustrious names, is necessary to the splendor of the future; and to create a France worthy of the destiny which he prepares for her, he has need of all her children." Without in the least suspecting the fact, Joséphine thus played a most important rôle in that policy of fusion, which was one of the greatest principles of Napoleon's administration, and one which specially characterized it.

On the 20 January 1800, at Mortefontaine was celebrated the marriage, by civil forms only, of Caroline Bonaparte and Joachim Murat. According to Madame Récamier, Caroline, although not so beautiful as her sister Pauline, was very attractive. She strongly possessed the Napoleonic type of countenance, and had much intelligence, and a strong will.

Murat, who at that time was only a general of division, was the most striking cavalier in the French army. Young, handsome, full of life, with his brilliant uniforms, on the field of battle or in a review, he attracted universal attention.

Napoleon at first was very much opposed to the match. When Murat was sent to Paris after the armistice of Cherasco, he was too attentive to the wife of his general-in-chief, and boasted rather indiscreetly of his *bonne fortune*. Later he fell in love with Caroline, during her visit to Milan, and was accepted by her. To secure the consent of Napoleon, they solicited the good offices of Joséphine. What better means of convincing

Bonaparte that, if Joséphine had ever favored Murat's suit, all was now over? Joséphine warmly espoused his cause, with the double object of putting an end to Napoleon's suspicions, and of securing in Murat a strong ally in her constant struggle against the enmity of the Bonapartes.

On the occasion of her marriage Caroline received from her brothers a dot of forty thousand francs, the same amount that they had given to Pauline. In addition she had a trousseau and presents of the value of twelve thousand francs. Nearly all the members of the family were present at the ceremony, but no mention can be found of the First Consul and his wife. The young couple took up their residence in the Hôtel de Brionne, near the Tuileries, and continued to be on the warmest terms of intimacy with Joséphine.

After living for three months at the Luxembourg, on the 19 February 1800 Napoleon moved to the Tuileries, which became his principal place of residence during the Consulate and the Empire. He occupied the suite of Louis the Fourteenth on the first floor, facing on the Gardens, while Joséphine lived below him on the ground floor, in the former apartment of Marie-Antoinette.

As at the Luxembourg, life at the Tuileries at first was very simple. It was too soon for the appointment of chamberlains and ladies of the palace. On the day of the formal entrance of the First Consul to the Tuileries, Joséphine, who had preceded him in a private carriage, was modestly placed in a window of the Pavillon de Flore, to view the ceremony. But two days later, when Bonaparte received the diplomatic corps, she had all

of the members presented to her, and held a court which recalled that of the queens.

During the early days, it was not easy to constitute a new society at the Tuileries. Bonaparte himself had had no experience in the world. Having passed all his time in the army, he had but few acquaintances at Paris, and found it necessary constantly to call upon his colleague Lebrun for information regarding persons and things. There would also have been a great outcry from the Republicans if he had immediately received the personages of the Ancien Régime, the royalists and the émigrés. These persons, at first, affected to draw a line between the First Consul and his wife. While they did not mount the steps to the apartment of Bonaparte on the first floor, they filled the rooms of the former Vicomtesse de Beauharnais on the floor below. Each décade, the First Consul gave in the Galerie de Diane a grand dinner with two hundred *couverts*. As the Russian Princesse Dolgorouki wrote at this time: " It was not exactly a Court, but it was no longer a camp."

As often as he could lay down the cares of office, generally three or four times a month, Bonaparte went to Malmaison for a day's rest. This estate, purchased by Joséphine during his absence in Egypt, had become his favorite place of recreation. The château was situated in a fine location, near the village of Rueil, on the left bank of the Seine, about nine miles from Paris. The building, which has recently been restored and presented to the State as a museum of Napoleonic souvenirs, consisted then, as now, of three stories, with a plain façade, and a tile roof. On the ground floor, at the left of the large vestibule, were the dining-room, the

CHÂTEAU OF MALMAISON

council chamber and the library; in the other wing, the billiard-room, the boudoir, the salon of Joséphine, and the gallery. From the library there was access to the garden by a little bridge thrown across the moat which runs along this side of the château.

From the billiard-room there was a staircase to the first floor. Here, at the right, an antechamber opened into Joséphine's bedroom, which was oval in form, and hung in red. For many years this was their common chamber, and here Joséphine drew her last breath while Napoleon was in exile at Elba. Two other adjoining rooms, and a bath-room, completed the private suite. In the other wing were the rooms occupied by Hortense after her marriage. In the middle there was a long corridor, from which opened several small rooms, occupied by the aides de camp on duty, or invited guests.

Malmaison was for Joséphine what the Petit-Trianon had been for Marie-Antoinette. In her time the grounds extended as far as the village of Rueil, and were beautifully decorated with exotic trees, rare plants, exquisite flowers, and small lakes with their white and black swans.

At Malmaison, Napoleon always appeared at his best. The great man relaxed, and threw off his cares; he was amiable, familiar, indulgent. He took part in the games with the ardor of a youth. He joked, he told stories with a spirit which astonished everybody. He was an admirable host, affable, spirituel, putting all his guests at their ease. At that time he had not yet abandoned his republican simplicity, and adopted the tiresome and chilling etiquette of the Imperial Court.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1800

THE QUESTION OF HEREDITY

The Season of 1800 at Paris — Problems of the First Consul — Success of His Administration — His Reception after Marengo — The "Conspiracy of Marengo" — Part Taken by Lucien and Joseph — The Meeting of Auteuil — Alliance of Fouché and Talleyrand — Joseph in Italy — Napoleon Answers the Pretender — Decision to Amend the Constitution — Alarm of Joséphine — The "Parallel" — Disgrace of Lucien — Louis Chosen — Joséphine's Plan

THE winter season of 1800 in Paris was very brilliant. On the 26 January the new Minister of the Interior, Lucien Bonaparte, gave a grand ball in honor of his sister Caroline and her husband, at the magnificent Hôtel Brissac, Rue de Grenelle, which he occupied at the time. Dinners and balls, which recalled the fêtes of the *fermiers-généraux* under the monarchy, were also given by the great bankers of the day. All classes of society took part in the social whirl, and the dance was never so popular. For a period of ten years the Parisians had been deprived of the popular masked balls of the Opéra, and their reopening was one of the features of the Carnival.

But while Paris danced and played the First Consul was occupied with very serious problems. The internal affairs of France were in very bad shape: the treasury was empty; civil war still raged in the Vendée; the soldiers were ill-fed and ill-clad; and the armies were demoralized from frequent defeats. The foreign situa-

tion was equally discouraging. The English Government had declined his pacific overtures, and with Austria it was clear that there was no chance of peace except through victory.

During the winter the energy and activity of Bonaparte were everywhere in evidence, and the sudden resurrection of France at this time is one of the most remarkable events in modern history. "Instantly, as if by enchantment," writes the English historian, Alison, "everything was changed; order reappeared out of chaos, talent emerged from obscurity, vigor arose out of the elements of weakness. The arsenals were filled, the veterans crowded to their eagles, the conscripts joyfully repaired to the frontier. La Vendée was pacified, the exchequer began to overflow. In little more than six months after Napoleon's accession, the Austrians were forced to seek refuge under the cannon of Ulm, Italy was regained, unanimity and enthusiasm prevailed among the people, and the revived energy of the nation was launched into a career of conquest."

On the 6 May, Bonaparte left Paris for Italy; two weeks later he crossed the Grand-Saint-Bernard; on the second day of June he entered Milan; on the fourteenth he decisively defeated the Austrians at Marengo, and at one stroke regained nearly all of the territory in northern Italy which had been lost during his absence in Egypt.

On his return to France, Napoleon received a perfect ovation at every stage of his journey. When he entered Paris the night of the second of July, after an absence of less than two months, the enthusiasm was indescribable. An innumerable crowd gathered in the Tuileries

Gardens to cheer him, and he expressed his pleasure to Bourrienne by saying: " The noise of these acclamations is as sweet to me as the sound of the voice of Joséphine! " Twenty years later, on the rock of Saint Helena, he spoke of this as one of the happiest days of his life.

During Napoleon's absence occurred the so-called " Conspiracy of Marengo," the details of which are little known. While he was still engaged in putting down the civil war at home, and repelling the foreign invaders from the frontiers of France, his brothers Joseph and Lucien had already begun the struggle for the supreme power in the event of his death. The question of heredity, which was to be the source of his greatest troubles, and one of the causes of his final downfall, had already been raised, before his supreme power was even definitely established.

As early as the month of February, Lucien was exchanging views with Bernadotte, who, during the Consulate and the Empire, never lived a day without plotting to overthrow Napoleon. A month before the departure of the First Consul for Italy, in his cabinet at the Tuileries, Fouché, regarding Lucien with his terrible eyes, exclaimed: " I will have the Minister of the Interior himself arrested, if I learn that he is conspiring! " A contemporary who endeavors to find excuses for Lucien, and to defend him from the charge of conspiracy, is forced to admit that: " The political immorality, the civil dishonesty of his administration; the disgraceful peculations, the insatiable cupidity of the agents by whom he was surrounded, did much to injure his brother's government."

Joseph, for his part, acted much more discreetly, but he let his brother know that he wished to be designated as his successor. Nothing in the new Constitution gave this power to the First Consul, who had been elected for ten years, and was reëligible. With his childish vanity, Joseph could see no reason why he should not be as acceptable to the French nation as the conqueror of Italy and Egypt, and thought that it only needed a word from Napoleon to amend in his favor a Constitution adopted by the practically unanimous vote of three million citizens!

In a conversation with the First Consul, the day before his departure for Italy, Joseph seems to have raised for the first time the question of the Consular heredity, and he showed his hand more clearly in a letter written on the 24 May. In all Corsicans there is a strong sentiment of the clan, from which Napoleon himself was not exempt. Joseph felt that, as the eldest, he was the chief of the clan, the head of the family; therefore, it was not a favor which he solicited: it was a right which he claimed.

But he did not rely entirely upon the support of Napoleon to gain his point. Upon the suggestion of his friend Miot, a council was held at Auteuil, at which were present nearly all the leading members of the former Assemblies. The possibility of the death of Bonaparte, and the question of his successor, were discussed; but the name of Joseph was not even mentioned. After wavering between La Fayette and Carnot, they decided in favor of the "organizer of victory," whom Napoleon had recalled from exile and made Minister of War.

At this same time an alliance was formed between Talleyrand and Fouché, which was to bear its full fruit fourteen years later, when these two arch-conspirators and under-handed enemies of Napoleon were to precipitate his fall and bring back the Bourbons. At this time, however, their plans only contemplated the formation of a triumvirate, consisting of themselves and one accommodating colleague.

Lucien was not involved in any of these later schemes. On the 14 May, he lost his wife; and for at least ten days he retired to his country estate, abandoning entirely the direction of his department.

In the meantime, Joseph was so anxious to obtain an immediate response from his brother that he could not remain quietly at Paris, and set out for Italy. When he arrived at Milan, the victory of Marengo had settled the whole question. Napoleon was now the absolute master of France, and the decision of the matter was entirely in his own hands. He was fully informed of the plots and counter-plots, but chose to ignore them all. The only outcome was that Carnot lost his portfolio.

Leaving for Italy in the costume of the Institute, on his return Napoleon presides over the Council of State in the uniform of general. It is only after Marengo that he feels his place secure as head of the State. It was not until the 7 September that he finally and definitely replied to the proposals of the Pretender:

" I have received, sir, your letter; I thank you for the polite things you say to me. You can not hope to return to France; it would be necessary for you to march over five hundred thousand dead bodies. Sacrifice your in-

terests to the repose and happiness of France. History will give you credit for your action."

The "Conspiracy of Marengo" is interesting because it marks the first grouping of factions which on several occasions were again to come to the front during the Empire; and because it reveals the principal weakness of Napoleon's personal régime. These plots convinced him of the necessity of providing for the Consular succession. The new Constitution, perhaps intentionally, had left the matter in very vague shape. For the first time Napoleon now fully realized the necessity of facing this question of heredity, so important to himself, to his brothers, and, above all, to Joséphine.

Napoleon, at the age of thirty-one, could not abandon the hope of an heir — hence the constant menace of divorce for Joséphine, who, after four years of marriage, could hardly expect to bear another child. Her hope also of a restoration of the Bourbons had now been extinguished by the action of her husband. In this dilemma she naturally sought the support of such former Jacobins as Fouché and Réal, who were opposed to the extension of the powers of the First Consul, and above all to the designation of his successor.

As for Napoleon's brothers, they felt that there could be no question of their *rights* to the succession. One would think, as Napoleon once expressed it, that he, as the younger brother, had usurped the place and the rights of Joseph, as successor to their father the late king! They were also so convinced that it was impossible for Napoleon himself to have any children, that they could not conceive of his repudiating Joséphine,

and marrying a younger woman in the hope of having an heir.

Lucien apparently recognized the rights of Joseph, as the elder, and was willing to await his turn as heir presumptive, especially as his brother had no children. The two brothers therefore sought, each in his own way, to secure the adoption of the principle of designation, after which each one hoped to be chosen.

With the death of his charming wife, Catherine Boyer, who, notwithstanding her common origin, had finished by gaining the love of all the family, as well as the general esteem of society, Lucien had more and more neglected his official duties, and plunged into all kinds of dissipation. Napoleon was obliged to call him to account, and there were several unpleasant scenes between the brothers.

Matters were finally brought to a head by the publication of the famous " Parallel." One morning, towards the end of October, Fouché entered the cabinet of the First Consul and handed him a little pamphlet entitled *Parallèle entre César, Cromwell et Bonaparte*. Two paragraphs were specially marked, which suggested the idea of heredity and pushed the candidacy of the brothers of the Consul.

This brochure, written by Lucien, although he denied it, and widely distributed under the frank of the Minister of the Interior, had caused a great sensation in all the departments. Lucien is summoned from his country place, Plessis, and there is a violent scene between him and Fouché in the presence of the First Consul. Napoleon remains a passive spectator of the discussion. Joséphine enters the room and takes part. She seats herself

upon Napoleon's knees, and runs her fingers gently through his hair and over his face. " I beg you, Bonaparte," she says, " do not make yourself a king. It is this wretch Lucien who urges you to it; do not listen to him."

With much regret, Napoleon asked for Lucien's resignation, and to cover his disgrace sent him as ambassador to Madrid, with an enormous salary.

This exile in disguise of Lucien is not all that Joséphine gains from the publication of the Parallel and the opportune intervention of Fouché. Napoleon is now fully convinced of the necessity of adopting the principle of the right of designation, but the choice of the individual presents many difficulties. He puts aside Joseph, a most worthy man, but with no application, and no capacity for public affairs. Lucien is now out of the question. For a moment he thinks of Eugène de Beauharnais, who would have been the best choice of all, but decides that he is too young and inexperienced. The next day he makes his decision. " It is not necessary," he says, " to cudgel our brains to find a successor. I have found one: it is Louis. He has all of the good qualities, and none of the faults of his brothers."

Joséphine was delighted when Napoleon informed her of his choice, in which, unconsciously, he may have been influenced by his wife. " Louis has an excellent heart, a very superior mind," she said. " He loves Bonaparte as a lover loves his mistress."

From that moment her plan was settled: Louis *must* marry Hortense!

CHAPTER TWELVE

1800–1802

MARRIAGE OF HORTENSE

Louis Bonaparte — His Early Years — Change in His Character — His Life in Paris — He Avoids Marriage — Hortense de Beauharnais — Her Appearance and Character — Love of Her Mother — Pride in Her Father — Early Dislike of Bonaparte — Fancy for Duroc — The Infernal Machine — Narrow Escapes of Napoleon and Joséphine — Public Demand for an Heir — Joséphine's Dismay — Louis Goes to Spain — Joséphine's Visit to Plombières — Return of Louis — His Marriage to Hortense

LOUIS BONAPARTE, who was born on the 2 September 1778, was nine years younger than Napoleon, who regarded him very much in the light of an adopted son. In February 1791, when Napoleon returned from his home in Corsica to his regiment at Auxonne, after an absence of nearly seventeen months, he brought with him his favorite younger brother. On his meagre pay of one hundred francs a month he had undertaken this care in order to relieve to some extent the financial difficulties of his widowed mother. In his shabby little room, with its sparse furniture, there was no place for Louis, and he slept on a mattress in an adjoining cabinet. Napoleon himself prepared their frugal meals. He gave his brother lessons in mathematics and generally supervised his education. At a later date he complained of his brother's ingratitude, and reminded him that for his sake he had de-

prived himself even of the necessaries of life. The blindness of Napoleon to the faults of his brothers and sisters is almost the only weak point in his character, as it also reveals one of the most attractive sides of his heart. He never could do too much for his family, who, almost without exception, repaid him with the basest ingratitude. They all seemed to think that their good fortune was due entirely to their own merits, and not at all to the senseless partiality of their great brother.

In 1795, Napoleon procured for Louis admission to the military school at Châlons. At this time he wrote in the warmest terms of his brother's fine qualities of heart and mind. The following year Louis, who was then only eighteen years of age, was one of Napoleon's aides de camp in Italy. He was his messmate, his private secretary, his man of confidence. At this time Louis was splendid company — always full of life and spirits. At Milan, he contracted a disease which in a short time not only affected his health, but seemed to change his moral character. For the rest of his life he was a regular hypochondriac — constantly worrying about his health and persuaded that he was doomed to an early death.

During the Egyptian expedition, Louis again acted as aide de camp to his brother, but was sent back to France with despatches some time before the return of Napoleon. In January 1800, when only twenty-two years of age, he was appointed chief of brigade. He then took up his residence in Paris, where he associated with men of letters and occupied himself with everything except his military career. He took no part in the Marengo campaign, during which he remained at Paris, occupied with his literary pursuits. None of his friends

seemed to understand the radical change in his character. Napoleon thought that a journey might rouse him from his melancholy, and proposed a trip to Germany, which Louis eagerly accepted, " to escape," he said later, " the solicitations for his marriage with Hortense."

It is impossible, however, for us to believe that Hortense was so disagreeable, or the plans of Joséphine so objectionable to him at this time as he tries to make out in his *Reflections upon the government of Holland,* drawn up twenty years later. Even if Joséphine, as early as August 1800, had formed in her secret heart the project which she carried out a year later, she certainly had not made any moves which could arouse in Louis the apprehension that she had designs upon his independence.

At that time Hortense was only seventeen years of age. She was not very pretty, but was singularly attractive from the beauty of her form and the grace of her movements. Her nose was large and her mouth ugly, with her mother's poor teeth, but her blond hair and soft violet eyes gave to her face an expression of exquisite tenderness: the *tout ensemble* was one which attracted and fascinated everybody. She had been educated at the fashionable school of Madame Campan and possessed all the accomplishments of a young lady of good family. She sang and danced well, she played the harp and the piano, she embroidered, she excelled in all the little tasks of the salon, she was quite literary in her tastes. She was a fine equestrian, and took a leading part in the sports and pastimes of the château life. In character, she was very sweet and amiable, but became

very obstinate when she was crossed. Her finest trait was her life-long adoration of her mother, which, it must be confessed, Joséphine had done little to deserve.

After their return from Martinique, her mother had placed her at the age of seven in a convent; when that was closed during the Revolution, she was apprenticed to a sempstress. Later she was practically abandoned for four years by her mother in the school at Saint-Germain. On the few rare occasions that Joséphine visited the school she was prodigal in her demonstrations of affection, with her kisses which cost her so little, for this mother was "coquette even with her children." Hortense regarded her mother as a wonderful being, and returned her affection a hundred fold. In her innocence she knew nothing of her mother's worldly life, of her struggle for existence, of the connections she formed, either from taste or necessity.

She knew that her father was the Vicomte de Beauharnais, a handsome cavalier, who attended the Queen's balls, was president of the Constituent Assembly, general-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine, and guillotined under the Terror. Her conception of her father's career was similar to that which we find in many of the histories, and equally far from the truth. She was proud of her name, one of the finest in France, and also of her mother, whom she considered worthy of her father.

Hortense had therefore been much chagrined when her mother married an obscure Republican general, of doubtful nobility, who had been absolutely unknown before the Revolution. She had only seen him once before the marriage, at a dinner given by Barras at the Luxembourg in January 1796. Hortense, who was then

not quite thirteen, had been taken from school for the occasion. She was jealous of the attentions to her mother of the little general, whose name she did not even know. She said: "He talked with great vivacity, and seemed only interested in my mother."

She next saw Bonaparte, for a few days only, on his return from Italy, and then again at the painful scene in the Rue de la Victoire, when she implored him to pardon her mother, without very clearly understanding what her mother had done. Under all the circumstances, would it not be strange if she had any love for her step-father?

Like most young girls, Hortense had a very sentimental side to her nature. She wished to marry for love, and to find love in her marriage. It has often been said that Duroc, the favorite aide de camp of Napoleon, loved her, and that she reciprocated his affection. The First Consul had thought of him for one of his sisters: he certainly would have accepted him for his step-daughter. Duroc was a gentleman — perhaps not of an illustrious family, but of better birth certainly than Bacciochi, Leclerc, or Murat. But Duroc was sent on a diplomatic mission to Berlin, and nothing came of this incipient love affair.

With her usual selfishness, Joséphine, in considering the *partis* who presented themselves, never thought of the happiness of her daughter, but only of her own personal interests. But this was usual in those days. Her aunt, Madame Renaudin, certainly had not thought of Joséphine's happiness when she married her to Alexandre de Beauharnais.

Even if Joséphine had not already made up her mind

to bring about the marriage of Louis and Hortense, she would have been decided by the attempt to assassinate the First Consul on Christmas eve 1800. The conspirators knew that he expected to be present at the Opéra that evening to hear the new oratorio of *The Creation,* by Haydn, the most popular composer of the day. They expected that his carriage would take the usual route by the Rue Saint-Nicaise, which is no longer in existence. This was a long narrow street bordering the Carrousel and running from the Seine to the Rue Saint-Honoré, where it ended near the Rue Richelieu in which the Opéra was then situated. In this street an infernal machine, installed in a one-horse cart, was placed at a point which Bonaparte's carriage would pass, and the time that it would take him to come from the Tuileries was carefully calculated so that the machine would explode at the right moment.

After dinner, Napoleon, who was fatigued from a hard day's work, had fallen asleep on a sofa, and was with difficulty aroused and persuaded to start by the ladies of the Tuileries, Joséphine, Caroline and Hortense, who did not wish to miss the performance. At eight o'clock he set out, accompanied by Lannes, Bessières and an aide de camp, and followed by a small escort of mounted grenadiers. The coachman, who had already begun his Christmas celebration, was half-drunk, and drove at a furious rate. This fact alone saved Bonaparte's life. The carriage passed the infernal machine, and had just rounded the corner into the Rue Richelieu when the explosion occurred. Lannes and Bessières wished to stop, but Bonaparte ordered the coachman to proceed. A minute later he entered the

loge with his usual calm face, and demanded a copy of the libretto.

The life of Joséphine was also saved by an incident equally trivial. She was wearing that evening for the first time a magnificent Oriental shawl presented to Bonaparte by the Sultan. Rapp, the aide de camp on duty, who was to escort the ladies, ventured to remark to Joséphine that she had not arranged the shawl with her usual grace. At her request he showed her how the shawl was draped by the Egyptian ladies. The party then descended the staircase of the Pavillon de Flore, and entered their carriage. They traversed the Carrousel, and had just turned into the Rue Saint-Nicaise when the machine exploded. The windows of the carriage were shattered and the arm of Hortense was slightly cut by a piece of glass. Rapp descended to see if the First Consul had been injured, and the carriage continued its way by another street. When the three ladies entered the box, Napoleon greeted them with a smile, as if nothing unusual had happened.

The news of this dastardly outrage, in which over fifteen people lost their lives, soon spread through the hall, and the oratorio was interrupted while the audience arose and frantically applauded the First Consul. A few minutes later the party left the Opéra and returned to the Tuileries, where Bonaparte received the reports of the police and the congratulations of his ministers.

This attempt on Napoleon's life was a terrible shock to Joséphine: it gave new impetus to the public demand for an heir to the First Consul, as necessary to the security of the State; and this for Joséphine aroused again the dreaded spectre of the divorce.

This conspiracy, following so closely on that of Aréna only two months before, which the police had discovered in time, convinced everybody that it was desirable to give the First Consul the right to designate his successor, and thus assure the heredity of the Consulate, or at least the continued existence of the government as established by him. It was no longer an academic question, to be debated and postponed from time to time, but an actual, urgent public necessity, which demanded immediate action. Joséphine realized that the crisis had come, and was more determined than ever to carry out her plan for the union of Louis and Hortense. If she herself could not give Napoleon an heir, he might find one in her grandchild and his nephew, the son of his favorite brother. Although Joséphine did not live to see her dream come true, all of Napoleon's plans came to naught, and it was the son of Louis and Hortense who occupied the Imperial throne as Napoleon the Third.

Louis was already tired of his tour of Germany, and asked permission of his brother to return to Paris. No sooner was he back than the strange idea possessed him of buying a country place, where he went to bury himself in midwinter. The house which he purchased was a simple rural mansion, in the woods, a league from the highway, about midway between Mortefontaine and Plessis, the country estates of Joseph and Lucien.

He had hardly taken possession of his new home, and begun some alterations, when he again became uneasy, and set out for Bordeaux to rejoin his regiment, which at his request had been included in the army of ob-

servation under the command of Leclerc which was going to Portugal.

In July 1801, Joséphine, who had not yet entirely abandoned all hope, went again to Plombières to take the waters, which the year before had succeeded so well in the case of Madame Joseph that, after seven years of marriage, she was just on the point of presenting her husband with their first child. A month later Joséphine returned to Malmaison to await in vain the miraculous effects of her *cure*.

At the end of three months Louis was tired of his military duties, and asked for a leave of absence. After spending several weeks at the baths of Barèges, to cure his rheumatism, at the end of September he came to Malmaison for a visit. There he fell in love with Hortense, and finally decided upon the marriage which he had previously dreaded.

There is absolutely no truth in the statements so often made by Louis in after years that the marriage was forced upon him. Three months elapsed between his return and the ceremony. During this period Louis showed himself very devoted to Hortense, while she seemed resigned to her lot. On the 3 January 1802 the contract was signed at the Tuileries in the presence of the whole family, and the following day the civil marriage took place, followed the same evening by a religious ceremony at the hôtel in the Rue de la Victoire.

The nuptial benediction was pronounced by Cardinal Caprara, who was then negotiating the Concordat with the French Government. At the same time Caroline and Murat, who had only been united by a civil bond,

had their marriage blessed by the Church. Joséphine ardently desired the same privilege, but Napoleon absolutely refused, either from reasons of public policy or in order to keep the way open for a divorce if in the future he desired one.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1802–1803

THE CONSULATE FOR LIFE

Bonaparte Made Consul for Life — He Takes Possession of Saint-Cloud — His Apartment in the Château — Court Etiquette Established — Trip to Normandie — Joséphine at Forty — Her Life at Saint-Cloud — A Scene of Jealousy at the Tuileries — Marriage of Pauline and Borghèse — Unfortunate Connection of Lucien — Jérôme Marries Miss Patterson

ON the second day of August 1802 the Senate declared Napoleon Bonaparte Consul for Life, with the power to name his successor. The decree conveyed to him, in its official terms, the expression of " the confidence, the admiration, and the love of the French people." In the plébiscite he received the votes of over three and a half million Frenchmen, with less than nine thousand in the negative.

At the same time the government gave him as a summer residence the royal château of Saint-Cloud. This palace was built at the edge of a magnificent park, on a long terrace overlooking the Seine, with the city of Paris at a distance in the background. The main building and the two projecting wings framed the court of honor; in the rear was a beautiful French garden, bordered on one side by an extension of the palace, and on the other by an alley shaded by magnificent trees. The property, which had previously belonged to private parties, was purchased by Louis the Fourteenth and

CHATEAU OF SAINT-CLOUD

presented to his brother the Duc d'Orléans. In 1785, Calonne, the prodigal controller of the finances, bought the château for six million francs, and the King gave it to Marie-Antoinette. She made extensive alterations in the building, and frequently resided there before the Revolution. Her last visit was in the summer of 1790, at which time she had her celebrated interview with Mirabeau. During the Revolution all of the furniture and hangings disappeared, and the palace had to be refurnished for the First Consul. As soon as the work was completed, Napoleon moved there, on the 20 September.

At Saint-Cloud, Joséphine occupied the apartments of Marie-Antoinette in the left wing. The suite of the First Consul was on the ground floor in the other wing. His cabinet was a large room, with the walls covered with books from floor to ceiling. He usually sat on a small sofa, placed near the mantel, which was decorated with two bronze busts of Scipio and Hannibal. Behind the sofa, in the corner of the room, was the desk of his secretary, Méneval, who had taken the place of Bourrienne, discharged for dishonesty. Adjoining the cabinet was a small salon, where the First Consul received his ministers and gave private audiences. In this salon there was a fine portrait of Gustavus Adolphus, the favorite hero of Napoleon. The only ornament of his bedroom, which faced on the garden, was an antique bust of Cæsar.

From the first, a rigid court etiquette was established at Saint-Cloud. Duroc, who was appointed governor of the palace, had a table for the officers, the aides de camp, and the ladies on duty. The First Consul took

his meals alone with his wife, but gave formal dinners twice a week for important officials of the government. The military household was composed of the four generals commanding the Consular Guard, Lannes, Bessières, Davout and Soult, and the seven aides de camp, among whom were Caulaincourt, Rapp and Savary. There were four prefects and the same number of ladies of the palace, of whom the best known were M. de Rémusat, and his wife, the author of the celebrated memoirs. The usages of the Court of Versailles had been copied so closely that there was even a serious idea of reviving the custom of powdered hair, but Napoleon could not bring himself to this, so hair was worn *au naturel.*

For the first time since the Revolution, religious practices were renewed; the First Consul insisted that on Sunday every one should go to Mass, and the Chapel at Saint-Cloud recalled that at Versailles.

The last of October Napoleon and Joséphine made a fortnight's trip to Normandie. The first day they went over the field of battle where Henry the Fourth gained the victory of Ivry. Then they passed a week at Rouen, where the First Consul visited all of the principal manufactories, and held a review of the National Guard. Another week was spent at Havre and Dieppe, inspecting the ports, the fortifications, and the ships under construction. On the evening of the 14 November the party was again back at Saint-Cloud.

The following ten weeks were spent at Saint-Cloud, except one day, the first week in December, when the First Consul went to the Tuileries to receive the English ambassador, Lord Whitworth, who presented his cre-

dentials. On the 23 January 1803 Napoleon and Joséphine returned to the Tuileries for the winter.

In 1803 Joséphine was forty years of age. Her beauty was somewhat faded, but she was so adroit in the use of cosmetics, she dressed with so much taste, that with her charm of manner and her air of distinction she could still be called a very attractive woman. No sovereign was ever more to the manner born. She received so well; she possessed in so high a degree the art of saying something appropriate and pleasant to every one; she had so much tact, and so much presence of mind, that any one would have thought she was born on the steps of a throne. She was popular with all parties and all factions. Fouché, who represented the element of the Revolution, was her friend, and all the personages of the Ancien Régime regarded her as their ally. She had done much good in her life, and had never injured anybody; even the severest critics of Bonaparte had only words of praise for his wife. All classes of society united in rendering her homage. She was not only popular, but she deserved her popularity. She was so much loved and admired that even the most rigid moralists had no words of reproach for her past indiscretions.

No woman ever justified better than Joséphine the saying that the eyes are the mirror of the soul. Her own, of a deep blue color, were almost always half-closed by her long eyelids fringed with the most beautiful eyelashes in the world; and her glance was absolutely irresistible. Another of her great charms was her voice, which was soft and musical, with the slightest Creole accent. She read well, and loved to read aloud. Napoleon preferred her to all other readers.

All who knew Joséphine unite in speaking of her kindness. Madame de Rémusat says: "She had a remarkable evenness of temper, much good-will, and the faculty of forgetting any wrong done her." Constant, the valet de chambre of Napoleon, bears the same testimony. "Kindness," he writes, "was as inseparable from her character, as grace was from her person; generous to the point of prodigality, she made every one around her happy. No woman was ever more loved by those near her, or more deserved to be."

Without having great intelligence, Joséphine possessed the most perfect *savoir faire*. She always found, without searching, the exact word for the occasion, the expression which touched and charmed, and this is better than *esprit,* because it comes, not from the head, but the heart. She was also a good listener, a trait both rare and remarkable. She never forgot a name or a face, and on meeting some one whom she had not seen in years, could always recall some pleasant incident connected with him.

As nearly always happens, Joséphine had the defects of her qualities: she was generous and charitable to a fault, but she was also prodigal to excess. As we shall see later, only the revenues of Imperial France could ever have sufficed to pay her debts.

At this time the First Consul and his wife made quite a happy household. At Saint-Cloud they always occupied the same chamber. About eight o'clock Napoleon arose, and went to his cabinet, where he breakfasted alone. Then he began his day's work, which generally occupied him until six o'clock, when he went for a drive with Joséphine. They dined together, and

he usually remained for a short chat afterwards. Then he returned to his cabinet, while Joséphine played cards, to finish the evening. Between ten and eleven, a chamberlain came to announce, "Madame, the First Consul has retired." Josephine immediately dismissed her company, and went to rejoin her husband.

After their return to the Tuileries this year, Napoleon decided to have his own room, separate from his wife. In this connection Madame de Rémusat recounts a scene which constitutes one of the strangest episodes in her interesting, but not always trustworthy, memoirs. That season a new actress, named Mlle. Georges, had made her début. She had very little talent, but great beauty, and Napoleon was seduced by her charms. Joséphine was informed that the young actress, on several evenings, had been secretly conducted to a quiet apartment in the Château. One night Joséphine kept Madame de Rémusat later than usual, and talked of her grievances. At one o'clock in the morning, they were alone in her salon, and the most complete silence reigned over the Tuileries. Suddenly Joséphine exclaimed: "I cannot keep quiet any longer. Mlle. Georges is certainly upstairs, and I am going to surprise them. Follow me; we will go up together." The lady of the palace protested, and tried, but in vain, to turn Joséphine from her purpose. They silently ascended the private staircase which led to the suite of Napoleon on the first floor. Suddenly they heard a slight noise, and stopped in their course. "It may be Roustan, who is guarding the door," said Joséphine. "The wretch is capable of cutting both our throats." Pale with terror, at these words Madame de Rémusat rushed back to

the salon, carrying the candle which she held in her hand, and leaving Joséphine in the dark. She followed, after a few minutes, and burst into laughter at the sight of her maid's discomposed countenance. After this they abandoned their enterprise.

Before adopting this change in his habitudes Napoleon one day asked Madame de Rémusat if she thought a husband should yield to the caprices of a wife who wished always to share his bed. The lady of the palace returned an evasive answer. Bonaparte began to laugh, and, pulling her ear, a favorite trick of his when in good humor, said: " You are a woman, and you are all in league together."

A recent biographer tells us that there is a pretty picture of Joséphine at this time, as she appeared at the wedding of Napoleon's sister Pauline: " With her short sleeves, bare arms, and her hair enclosed in a gilt net, she looked like a Greek statue." The first Consul led her to a mirror, that he might see her on all sides at once, and, kissing her shoulder, said: " Ah, Joséphine, I shall be jealous. Why are you so beautiful to-day? " It is really a pity to destroy so idealistic a picture, but as a matter of fact Napoleon was not present at his sister's wedding.

The first day of January 1803, Pauline returned from the disastrous expedition to Saint-Domingue, where her husband, Leclerc, had succumbed to the unhealthy climate. She herself was suffering from a grave malady, from which she never entirely recovered. For two months after her return to Paris, Pauline lived with Joseph at his town house, but in April she purchased

for four hundred thousand francs the magnificent Hôtel Charost in the Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, a few doors from Joseph's Hôtel Marbeuf.

At this same time there arrived in Paris the Prince Camillo Borghèse, the chief of one of the richest and most illustrious Roman families. At a house party at Mortefontaine in June he was presented to Pauline. By this time the young widow, who was not yet twenty-three, had somewhat recovered from her real grief over the loss of Leclerc, and was tired of wearing mourning, which did not become her style of beauty. She was much attracted by the personality of Borghèse, but perhaps even more by the idea of being a real princesse, and taking the *pas* over her dear sisters Bacciochi and Murat, as well as her sisters-in-law, Joséphine and Hortense. A few days after their first meeting, she authorized Joseph to make overtures to the prince. The matter was quickly arranged, and on the 21 June Borghèse formally announced to Joseph his desire to marry Pauline. He only asked that the proposed alliance should remain a secret until he had time to obtain his mother's consent. At the same time Pauline wrote the First Consul to ask his approval. The mother of the prince was delighted with the alliance, and on the first day of August the engagement was announced by the Paris journals. On the 23 August the marriage contract was signed, only by Pauline and Borghèse, at the Hôtel Charost. On the 14 August, and again a week later, the banns were published at Mortefontaine. It was generally anticipated that the marriage would take place on the 28 August, but just then a difficulty arose: they had forgotten Leclerc! He had died on the second

day of November 1802, and the social rules, reëstablished and formally promulgated by the First Consul himself, forbade a widow to remarry during a period of one year and six weeks after the death of her husband. In this dilemma Madame Bonaparte, who was as domineering and imperious as her great son, took charge of affairs, and ordered the marriage to take place. On the 28 August, or perhaps four days later, the ceremony was performed at Mortefontaine by an Italian priest, who may have been Cardinal Caprara himself. The exact date is uncertain, as the certificate was never filed.

This " marriage of conscience " was known only to the mother, and two of the brothers of the bride, Joseph and Lucien. Napoleon was so ignorant of the matter that on the 25 September he gave Pauline a dinner of two hundred *couverts* at the Tuileries, and afterwards took her to Saint-Cloud to pass several days with him. A month later, the 23 October, he gave another large dinner to his sister, to which Borghèse was invited. Napoleon intended on this occasion to announce formally the date of the marriage. He was still ignorant of the fact that a religious ceremony had taken place, without a previous civil contract as required by law.

The official marriage was finally celebrated at Mortefontaine on the 6 November, but the First Consul was not present. He had left for Boulogne three days before, to inspect the fleet, and did not return to Saint-Cloud until after the middle of the month. This absence was intentional: Napoleon was enraged at having been thus deceived by his favorite sister, by his mother and his brothers, in short, by everybody.

At the wedding there were present all the members

of the family except Napoleon, and Lucien, who ten days before had secretly contracted another alliance, which was to disgrace him with his brother. The wedding of Pauline was announced by only two lines in the official journal: " Madame Leclerc has married Prince Borghèse; the marriage was celebrated at Mortefontaine." Napoleon pressed the departure of the newly married couple, and several days before his return from Boulogne they were on their way to Italy.

The marriage of Pauline had wounded the heart of Napoleon, but almost at the same time there occurred two other weddings in the family which brought other cares; which disturbed the family harmony, and exercised a decisive influence on the fortunes of two of the brothers.

In May or June 1802, Lucien had met, while on a visit in the country, a young woman with whom he became desperately enamored. Her name was Alexandrine de Bleschamp, and at the age of nineteen she had married a certain Monsieur Jouberthou. Later she had been abandoned at Paris, almost without resources, when her husband sailed for Saint-Domingue to try and retrieve his fortunes. A few months later she met Lucien. Affairs moved quickly, and in August Madame Jouberthou was installed in Lucien's mansion at Plessis. When he returned to Paris she was lodged in a house which communicated by a subterranean passage with Lucien's hôtel in the Rue Saint-Dominique. There, on the 23 May 1803, was born a child who was declared before the municipality under the name of Jules-Laurence-Lucien. This eldest son of Lucien was subsequently legitimized by the marriage of his parents, and

he was later called Charles after his grandfather. This ceremony, however, was not performed until the 23 October 1803, after Lucien had finally succeeded in obtaining a certificate of the death of Jouberthou at Port-au-Prince the 15 June 1802.

If the affair of Lucien was serious, in the eyes of Napoleon that of his youngest brother was worse. In February 1802, Jérôme sailed with the French fleet for the West Indies. Born the 15 November 1784, he was then only seventeen years of age. Two months later he returned to Paris as bearer of despatches from Leclerc. Promoted to the rank of ensign, he sailed again on the 18 September for Martinique. Soon tiring of his naval career, Jérôme decided to return to France by way of New York, and sailed for Virginia on an American pilot boat. He landed at Norfolk the 20 July 1803, and a week later he was in Washington. During his stay there he met at Baltimore a very attractive girl of about his own age, named Elizabeth Patterson, the daughter of a wealthy merchant, and on the 24 December they were married. The chargé d'affaires at Washington, Pichon, had done everything in his power to prevent the marriage. He wrote Mr. Patterson and Jérôme to point out that any marriage contracted without the consent of Madame Bonaparte, during her lifetime, under the French law would be absolutely null and void. Jérôme was too much in love to hesitate, and the young lady and her father were willing to take a chance.

When the news reached France, the First Consul sent his brother peremptory orders to return, but owing to various causes Jérôme did not reach Europe until over a year later.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1803–1804

THE ROYALIST PLOTS

Rupture of the Peace of Amiens — The Celebrated Scene with the English Ambassador — The Visit to Belgium — An Unfortunate Episode at Mortefontaine — First Suggestions of the Empire — Magnificent Reception at Brussels — The Royalist Conspiracies — Cadoudal and Pichegru Reach Paris — Joséphine's Pacific Counsels — Petty Vanity of Mme. Moreau — Her Husband's Jealousy of Bonaparte — Arrest, Trial and Exile of Moreau — Deaths of Pichegru and Cadoudal — The Execution of the Duc d'Enghien

ON the 27 March 1802, the long war between England and France had been ended by the Treaty of Amiens, which was very popular in both countries. Unfortunately the peace was to last only a year. On the 13 March 1803 at the Tuileries occurred the celebrated scene between Bonaparte and the English ambassador, which presaged the renewal of the struggle.

Once a month the First Consul was accustomed to receive the ambassadors and their wives in Joséphine's apartment. This audience was always a very ceremonious affair. The ministers were conducted to a salon, and when all were present the First Consul and his wife appeared, followed by a prefect and a lady of the palace. After the formal presentations had been made, Napoleon and Joséphine carried on a short conversation, and then withdrew.

On the present occasion, Madame de Rémusat entered Joséphine's room a few minutes before the hour fixed for the reception. She found Bonaparte there, sitting on the floor, and playing gaily with the baby Napoleon, the child of Louis and Hortense, who was then only five months old. At the same time he amused himself by commenting on the toilettes of the two ladies, and giving his advice about their dresses. He laughed continuously, and seemed to be in the best possible humor.

In a few minutes he was notified that the ambassadors had all arrived. Getting up, his whole expression suddenly changed; the laughter left his lips, and his features became very severe. Exclaiming, " Let us go, ladies! " he rushed from the room, and entered the salon. Without saluting any one, he walked directly to the English minister, and immediately began to complain of the measures of his Government. His anger seemed to increase from moment to moment, and rose to a point which terrified the whole assembly. The harshest words, the most violent menaces, issued from his trembling lips. No one dared to make a movement, and Joséphine looked on mute with astonishment. The phlegmatic Englishman was so disconcerted that he could hardly find a word to reply.

Leaving the dumfounded ambassador, Bonaparte spoke to two of the other ministers, then returned to Lord Whitworth, and made a few polite personal remarks. Suddenly his anger seemed to return. " You are then decided on war? " he exclaimed; " we have already had it for ten years; you wish to have it for ten years more; and you force me into it. . . . Why these

armaments? If you arm, I shall arm too. You can perhaps destroy France, but intimidate her, never! " At this moment his face was red with anger, and he seemed in a paroxysm of fury.

Two months later Lord Whitworth demanded his passports, and the long contest was resumed, which was only to end on the field of Waterloo. Napoleon immediately began his preparations, and as a preliminary to the gigantic struggle decided to visit in state the northern departments, and in particular the great port of Antwerp, " that pistol pointed at the heart of England."

The First Consul decided that the journey should be made with the greatest magnificence, and that his wife should accompany him, in order to make use of her well-known powers of attraction. He had the Crown jewels taken out of the safe deposits where they were stored, and gave them to Joséphine, who, we may be sure, was not reluctant to employ them. Two of the ladies of the palace, Mesdames de Rémusat and Talhouet, were chosen to accompany the party, and the First Consul gave each of them thirty thousand francs for the expenses of their toilettes. On the 24 June 1803 they left Saint-Cloud, with a cortège of several carriages, two generals of the Guard, the aides de camp, Duroc, and two prefects of the palace, of whom M. de Rémusat was one.

The first night was passed at the country home of Joseph, Mortefontaine, where nearly the whole Bonaparte family was reunited. Here a very unpleasant scene occurred. Just before dinner, Joseph notified Napoleon that he intended to take in their mother, and

place her at his right hand, with Joséphine at his left. The First Consul was offended at this arrangement, which put his wife in second place, but Joseph refused to yield. When the dinner was announced, Napoleon gave his arm to Joséphine, entered unceremoniously before every one, and placed her by his side. The whole party was so disarranged that poor meek Madame Joseph found herself at the foot of the table, as if she did not belong to the family. During the dinner Napoleon occupied himself exclusively with his wife, and did not address a word to any one else.

The second night was passed at Amiens, where the First Consul was received with enthusiasm impossible to describe. The people detached the horses and drew the carriage themselves. Joséphine was moved to tears by the cries of joy, the garlands of flowers which crowned the route, the triumphal arches erected in honor of the restorer of France, the benedictions which were too general not to have been absolutely spontaneous.

In several of the cities of Flanders the mayors in their addresses ventured to suggest that the First Consul should replace his precarious title by one more in accord with the high destiny to which he was called. Bonaparte could hardly conceal his pleasure at these words, but interrupted the orator to say in a tone of assumed anger that he could not think of changing the Republic: like Cæsar he rejected the crown which nevertheless he was not reluctant to have presented to him.

After these receptions the First Consul usually mounted his horse, and showed himself to the people,

who received him with cheers; then he visited the public buildings and the manufactories, in his usual hurried manner. In the evening he attended the dinner offered him, which was the most tiresome part of his day's work, for, as he expressed it: "I am not made for pleasure."

Everywhere in old France the party was received with the same enthusiasm, but in Flanders there was not so much warmth. On arriving at Antwerp the First Consul showed great interest in this important port, and gave orders for the great works which were afterwards carried out.

The entry into Brussels was magnificent. At the gate of the city, the First Consul was received by several regiments of troops; he mounted his horse, and Joséphine found a superb carriage placed at her disposal. The whole city was decorated; the artillery fired salutes; all the church bells were rung; the streets were thronged by the people; and the July day was perfect. During the week there was a succession of fêtes. It was on one of these occasions that Talleyrand replied in a manner so adroit and so flattering to a sudden question of Bonaparte, who demanded how he had made his large fortune so quickly. "Nothing easier," replied the minister, "I bought government securities on the day before the 18 Brumaire, and sold them the day after!"

From Brussels the party returned by way of Liége and Sedan to Saint-Cloud, where they arrived on the 11 August after an absence of seven weeks. Joséphine was delighted with this trip, during which she left everywhere recollections of her charm and grace, which were never to be effaced.

This triumphal progress of Bonaparte through the northern departments excited to the highest degree the rage of the Royalists, and plots were immediately formed for his removal. The heads of this conspiracy were the Chouan leader, Georges Cadoudal, and the former Republican general, Pichegru. Moreau, the victor of Hohenlinden, considered by many as the second soldier of France, was also gravely implicated.

Not far from Dieppe there is a cliff two hundred and fifty feet high: this was the point where Cadoudal entered France on the night of the 22 August 1803. It was a place well known to smugglers, who nightly climbed the rock with the aid of a ship cable hung from the top. By the same route Pichegru and several other conspirators arrived several weeks later. Walking by night, and hiding by day, they all eventually arrived at Paris, where under different disguises they eluded for a long time the vigilance of the police.

On a dark night in January Pichegru had an interview with Moreau on the Boulevard de la Madeleine. The two generals had not met since the days that on the borders of the Rhine they were gloriously fighting the battles of France. The meeting was not entirely harmonious, and the Comte d'Artois was deceived by false reports when he exclaimed with joy: " Now that our two generals are in accord I shall soon be back in France! "

During this time Bonaparte was far more nervous and uneasy than on the field of battle, where he always displayed the greatest calm. He directed the movements of the secret police and stimulated their zeal. In the

midst of these hidden perils Joséphine showed great courage. With her usual kindness of heart, she urged her irritated husband not to confound the innocent with the guilty, and not to hold the whole royalist party responsible for the acts of a few fanatics. Unfortunately Napoleon did not listen to these wise counsels. In the state of excitement to which his nerves had been wrought up by the renewal of these infamous attempts on his life, he decided on a policy of vengeance which should strike terror to the hearts of his foes.

At a special meeting of the Council on the night of the 14 February the only subject discussed was the Cadoudal-Pichegru conspiracy, and orders were issued for the immediate arrest of Moreau.

When a great crime is under investigation in France the prosecutor always enjoins upon the agents of justice: "*Cherchez la femme!*" The woman in this case was Madame Moreau. Without the jealousy and petty vanity of this woman her husband, instead of meeting an ignominious death fighting in the ranks of the enemies of his country, would have become like Davout, Masséna and Ney, a duc and prince, a maréchal de France.

Moreau had met Bonaparte for the first time after his return from Egypt, and the two celebrated generals had become quite friendly. On the 18 Brumaire Moreau had taken an active part in the coup d'état. Exactly a year later, on the 9 November 1800, he married a Mlle. Hulot, who had been a companion of Hortense in the school of Madame Campan. Joséphine had contributed much to bring about this match, which she thought

would be useful to the interests of the First Consul. Ten days after the wedding Moreau left Paris to take command of the Army of Germany, and on the 3 December 1800 he gained the brilliant victory of Hohenlinden, which led to the Peace of Lunéville two months later. Shortly after the battle Madame Moreau rejoined her husband in Germany, and her pride was increased by the sight of the *éclat* with which he was everywhere received.

On their return to Paris, the *amour-propre* of Madame Moreau was wounded on several occasions by what she considered to be the incivility or social slights of the First Consul. Like Joséphine, she was the daughter of a Creole, and her mother, who was a sensitive, as well as a very vindicative woman, told her that she was younger, prettier and better educated than Madame Bonaparte; that her husband had commanded as large armies, and rendered as brilliant services to the Republic as Bonaparte, and that there was no reason why General and Madame Moreau should occupy a second place in the State.

There were only too many persons at Paris, both republicans and royalists, who were interested in fanning the flames. The royalists, in particular, paid very marked attentions to Madame Moreau, and frequented her handsome hôtel in the Rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré. Bonaparte was exasperated by the petty social war which was waged against himself and his wife. He detested the pin-pricks, and feared them more than the strokes of a dagger.

Influenced by his wife, Moreau refused an invitation for dinner at the Tuileries, and also declined to accom-

pany the First Consul to a review. This coldness shortly degenerated into declared enmity. The city hôtel of the general and his handsome country place, Grosbois, soon became centres of opposition to the Consular government.

When Madame de Rémusat arrived at the Tuileries one February morning she found Joséphine much troubled. Napoleon was seated near the fireplace playing with the little Napoleon. " Do you know what I have done? " he said. " I have just given the order to arrest Moreau." He continued: " Twenty times have I prevented him from compromising himself; I have warned him that they would embroil us; and he felt that I was right. But he is feeble and proud; the women directed him: the parties urged him on." Thus speaking, Bonaparte arose, went to his wife, took her by the chin, and raised her head. " Everybody has not a good wife like mine. You are crying, Joséphine, but why? Are you afraid? " " No," replied she, " but I do not like what they will say." Then turning to the lady of the palace, Bonaparte continued: " I have no hatred, no desire for vengeance; I have deeply reflected before arresting Moreau; I could have closed my eyes, and given him time to escape, but people would have said that I was afraid to put him on trial. I can convince them that he is guilty; I am the government; everything will be easily settled."

At the trial the evidence against Moreau was not conclusive. He was condemned to two years in prison, but was accorded the permission to retire to America. In order to furnish him with funds for his exile, Napoleon purchased his Paris house for 800,000 francs, much

more than its real value, and presented it to Bernadotte; also his handsome estate of Grosbois, which he gave to Berthier.

Pichegru was finally betrayed by an old companion-in-arms, one of his most intimate friends, who came to the police and offered to give him up for a hundred thousand crowns. On the last day of February he was arrested in Paris, and six weeks later was found strangled in prison. His death has often been charged to Napoleon, but without the slightest evidence.

On the 9 March, Cadoudal was taken at seven o'clock in the evening in the Place de l'Odéon, and was executed the last week in June.

According to the police reports the conspirators had expected the early arrival in France of a prince of the royal house. Attention was at first directed to the cliff of Béville, near Dieppe, where Cadoudal and Pichegru were now known to have entered the country, but the watch was in vain. Then the search was turned to the banks of the Rhine. It was learned that the young Duc d'Enghien, the son of the Duc de Bourbon, was at Ettenheim in the grand-duchy of Baden, just across the river. As a youth of twenty he had served twelve years before in the army of the Émigrés organized by his grandfather, the Prince de Condé, for the invasion of France. In 1801, after the peace of Lunéville, he had laid down his arms and taken up his residence in the former château of Cardinal de Rohan on the right bank of the Rhine ten miles from Strasbourg. Here he lived the life of a private citizen, in the company of a young and charming woman who was devoted to him, the Princesse de Rohan.

An under-officer of the gendarmerie was secretly sent in disguise to Ettenheim in search of information. The prince at this time had with him an émigré by the name of Thumery, which the German servants pronounced Thoumeriez, and the spy reported that the French traitor Dumouriez was with the Duc d'Enghien. This information reached Paris on the 10 March 1804, and on the same day a servant of Cadoudal deposed that a young man, who was treated with the utmost respect, on several occasions had been in conference with the conspirators at Paris. On the strength of these various reports the First Consul jumped to the conclusion that the young Bourbon prince was deeply implicated in the conspiracy against his life.

A special meeting of the Council was held at the Tuileries at ten o'clock on the evening of the 10 March, at which were present the three Consuls, and all the ministers. It was decided to issue orders for the immediate arrest of the Duc d'Enghien and the supposed General Dumouriez. Caulaincourt was sent with a letter to the Grand Duke of Baden, explaining this violation of German territory.

Five days later thirty dragoons and twenty-five gendarmes under the command of Colonel Ordener crossed the river at Rheinau, opposite Ettenheim, and surrounded the château just as the day was beginning to break. The prince was taken without any resistance, and was conducted directly to Strasbourg, where he was interned in the citadel. At the end of three days he was placed in a postal-chaise and transferred to the château of Vincennes at Paris where he arrived late on the afternoon of the 20 March.

Let us now see what was taking place at Paris during this time. On Passion Sunday, the 18 March, Madame de Rémusat took up her duties again as a dame du palais. Early in the morning she went to the Tuileries to be present at the Mass, which at this time was celebrated with much pomp. Afterwards, Joséphine held an informal reception in the salons, and then descended to her own apartment, where she announced that they were going to Malmaison to pass the week. Several hours later they set out, Bonaparte in one carriage, and Joséphine with Madame de Rémusat in another. Joséphine seemed sad and preoccupied, and had little to say. Finally she remarked: "I am going to tell you a great secret. This morning Bonaparte informed me that he had sent Caulaincourt to the frontier to seize the Duc d'Enghien. They are going to bring him here." "Ah! mon Dieu, madame," cried the lady, "what do they intend to do?" "Why, I think they mean to put him on trial."

Joséphine went on to say that she had done everything she could to obtain an assurance from the First Consul that the prince should not be condemned, but she was afraid that Bonaparte's mind was made up, and that the duc must die.

Before dinner the First Consul played chess, and appeared as calm and serene as usual. After the dinner, at which nothing important transpired, he retired to his cabinet to work with the police. The two following days passed quietly and sadly. Convinced that the fate of the prince was decided, Joséphine made no further efforts to turn her husband from his purpose.

Tuesday morning Joséphine said: "It is all hopeless.

The Duc d'Enghien arrives this evening; he will be taken to Vincennes, and tried to-night. Murat is in full charge. He is odious in this matter. It is he who is urging Bonaparte on. . . . Bonaparte has forbidden me to say anything more to him on the subject." In the afternoon, the First Consul again played chess, and insisted on having the little Napoleon at dinner. He had the baby placed in the middle of the table, and was much amused to see him upset everything around him. After dinner Bonaparte seated himself on the floor, and played with the child. Noticing the pallor of Madame de Rémusat he asked why she had forgotten to put on her rouge, and added with a laugh: " That would never happen to you, Joséphine! "

When they came downstairs at eight o'clock the next morning Savary was already in the salon. Joséphine said: " Well, is it done? " " Yes, madame," he replied. " He died this morning, and, I must admit, with fine courage." He then gave the details, which are now well known.

By many persons, the execution of the Duc d'Enghien is considered the greatest blot on the fame of Napoleon. Talleyrand, with his usual cynicism, said: " It is worse than a crime; it is a blunder." Naturally there was a cry of indignation from the royalists everywhere. It was perfectly legitimate for them to attempt the life of the plebeian usurper, but he must not shed a drop of the blue blood of the Bourbons! Napoleon himself never offered any excuses for his action on this occasion. Upon the threshold of eternity, in his last testament at Saint Helena, he wrote with his own hand: " I had the Duc d'Enghien arrested and tried because it

was necessary for the security, the interest, and the honor of the French people, at a time when the Comte d'Artois, by his own admission, was maintaining sixty assassins at Paris. Under the same circumstances I would again do the same."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1804

EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

The Empire Proclaimed — The Ceremony at Saint-Cloud — Joséphine Hailed as Empress — Dissatisfaction of the Bonapartes — Chagrin of Caroline — Napoleon Yields — Joséphine's Attitude — Eugène de Beauharnais — The Fête of the 14 July — Visit to the Banks of the Rhine — A Letter from Napoleon — The Court at Mayence — Return to Saint-Cloud

THERE is no city in the world where things are forgotten so quickly as in Paris, and the impression made by the death of the Duc d'Enghien soon passed away. Even with the royalists the event caused more sorrow than indignation. The First Consul decided to appear in public as usual, and soon went with his wife to the Opéra, where he was greeted with the customary applause. A week after the execution, the Senate in an address formally called on Bonaparte to guarantee the future by rendering his work " as immortal as his glory."

In the Tribune, on the 28 April a member suggested a hereditary empire, and five days later the proposition was adopted by the vote of all the members except Carnot. The Senate disputed the initiative of the Tribune in this matter, because six weeks before Fouché had made an appeal to that body to establish hereditary power in the person of Bonaparte as the surest means of preserving the benefits of the Revolution.

At the session of the 18 May the Senate adopted a decree worded as follows:

" The French people decree the heredity of the Imperial dignity in the descent, direct, natural, legitimate, and adopted, of Napoleon Bonaparte; and in the descent, direct, natural, and legitimate, of Joseph Bonaparte and of Louis Bonaparte."

Then the Senate adjourned, and proceeded in a body to Saint-Cloud to hail the new sovereign, Napoléon 1er. Napoleon, in uniform, received them in the magnificent Gallery of Apollo where four and a half years before, in the early hours of a gloomy November morning, he had taken his oath as consul. Now it is a day of splendid May sunshine, and Joséphine, radiant with joy, is by the side of her husband, whose triumph she modestly shares.

In the name of the Senate, Cambacérès pronounces a solemn discourse, which ends with the expression of the hope that the decree shall immediately be executed, and Napoleon instantly proclaimed as Emperor of the French. There is enthusiastic applause in the gallery, which is echoed throughout the château, and in the courts and gardens. The cry of " *Vive l'Empereur!* " to be heard later on so many fields of battle, for the first time splits the air.

Napoleon, arrived at the goal of his ambition, conceals his pride under an air of outward calm. He is so much at ease in his new rôle of monarch, that one would imagine he was born to the purple.

It is next the turn of the new Empress to receive the homage of the Senate. Cambacérès, in his most flowery manner, conveys to Joséphine the expression of the

respect and gratitude of the French people for her never failing kindness and sympathy in cases of misfortune, the living remembrance of which would teach the world that, to dry the tears, is the surest way to reign over the hearts. Behold therefore the modest and gracious Creole elevated to the rank of sovereign!

In the chorus of acclamations which echoed from every part of France there was scarcely a discordant note. The people ratified the Napoleonic dynasty by the almost unanimous vote of over three and a half millions in the affirmative against twenty-five hundred in the negative — a majority larger than that obtained for the Consulate. If supreme power is ever to be based upon the foundation of a nation's will, no ruler in history ever had a clearer title to his throne than Napoleon Bonaparte!

In the midst of these scenes of joy, the only persons who appear dissatisfied are the members of the new imperial family, who ought to be the most delighted, and the most astonished at their grandeur. Nothing seems sufficiently splendid to meet their extravagant desires. When we think of the modest mansion of their father at Ajaccio, it is impossible to suppress a smile at the pretentions of these new princes and princesses of the blood. Of the four brothers of Napoleon, two are absent and in disgrace: Lucien, for his marriage with Madame Jouberthou; Jérôme for having wedded Miss Patterson. His mother has espoused the cause of Lucien, and followed her son into exile at Rome. Joseph and Louis are disappointed because their children, instead of themselves, are designated in the line of succession. Élisa and Caroline are full of chagrin because they are

placed in the official scale below their sister-in-law, the Empress, and they are plunged in despair because they do not yet receive the title of princesse like the wives of Joseph and Louis. They certainly must have expected that the wife of the Emperor would receive an exalted rank, but they did not imagine that Julie and Hortense, who were not of the *blood,* could bear titles which they themselves did not have.

After the reception of the Senate at Saint-Cloud, at which Élisa and Caroline were present, the Emperor asked them to remain for dinner. As they were about to go to the table, Duroc announced the titles which should be given to each one, and in particular to the wives of the princes. Mesdames Bacciochi and Murat appeared astounded at the difference between themselves and their sisters-in-law. Madame Murat, especially, found it difficult to conceal her chagrin. About six o'clock the Emperor appeared, and began, without any appearance of embarrassment, to salute each one with his new title. The Empress showed her usual amiability; Louis appeared satisfied; Madame Joseph, resigned to what was expected of her; Madame Louis, equally submissive; Eugène de Beauharnais, simple and natural, with an air free from all signs of ambition or disappointment. It was not the same with the new marshal, Murat, but fear of his brother-in-law forced him to self-restraint, and he displayed a thoughtful reticence. As for Madame Murat, she was in despair, and had so little self-control that when she heard the Emperor, on several occasions during the dinner, address the *Princesse* Louis, she could not repress her tears; she drank in succession several large glasses of

water, in the endeavor to recover her composure, but the tears continued to fall.

Her sister, Madame Bacciochi, older, and more mistress of herself, did not cry; but she was brusque and cutting in her manner, and treated the dames du palais with marked *hauteur*.

After a while the Emperor became annoyed, and increased the discomforture of his sisters by teasing them with indirect banter. On this occasion there were too many people present for the matter to go further, but the following day at the family dinner, Madame Murat broke out in tears and complaints. Napoleon lost his temper, and replied very severely. Caroline, who could endure no more, fell on the floor in a dead faint. This had an immediate effect on Napoleon, who calmed down, and agreed to do what they wanted. The next day the official paper inserted the following note: "To the French princes and princesses is given the title of Imperial Highness: *the sisters of the Emperor bear the same title.*"

In the midst of all these family *désagréments* Joséphine maintained her usual amiable serenity. The conduct of his brothers and sisters was in such contrast with that of his wife and her children that Napoleon could not help being impressed with the difference. Except for money, from time to time, to pay her debts, Joséphine asked nothing. For the rest, she accepted whatever it pleased her husband to give her, but without any appearance of desiring it, and without any pretention that it was due her. If he gave to others, she approved, and never displayed any envy. Her conduct, whether calculated or not, was so adroit that every one

was struck by her disinterestedness, and her husband most of all.

With respect to her children Joséphine showed exactly the same spirit. As Napoleon himself stated later, she never asked anything for Eugène; never even thanked him for what he did for her son, and never showed any particular appreciation of his favors. At the début of the Empire, Napoleon did nothing for Eugène, who found himself relegated, by his duties and his rank, to the waiting-room the most distant from the Emperor's apartment. Eugène seemed to consider this entirely natural, and made no complaint. When Napoleon offered him through Joséphine the office of Grand Chamberlain, Eugène modestly declined, saying in excuse that this employment suited neither his tastes nor his character, his vocation being entirely military. No reply could have better pleased the Emperor, who at once increased his allowance from 30,000 to 150,000 francs, and appointed him colonel-general of the Chasseurs à cheval, which made him a grand officer of the Empire.

The new Empire opened brilliantly; and no one seemed to give a thought to the Republic, of which almost the only vestige left was the gold coins that continued for several years to bear the anomalous inscription: "République Française, Napoléon Empereur." The first public appearance of the new sovereigns on a formal occasion was at the fête of the 14 July, anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, which this year was to be the occasion of the presentation of the crosses of the Légion d'honneur. For the first time they traversed in a carriage the grande allée of the Tuileries Gardens,

and proceeded with great pomp to the Hôtel des Invalides. The ceremony took place in the church, which during the Revolution had been made a Temple of Mars, and was now again consecrated for religious uses. After the Mass, and a discourse by the grand chancellor of the Order, the Emperor pronounced the oath, and each of the members cried: " Je le jure! " Napoleon then called to him Cardinal Caprara, who had negotiated the Concordat, and who was soon to be of great service in deciding the Pope to come to Paris for the Coronation. Detaching from his neck the cordon of the Légion, the Emperor presented it to the venerable prelate.

On this occasion the Empress had a great personal triumph. She wore a robe of pink tulle covered with silver stars, with a very décolleté corsage, as was then the fashion, although the ceremony took place in full daylight. Clusters of diamonds crowned her head. Radiant with happiness, she never appeared to greater advantage.

Four days later the Emperor left Saint-Cloud for Boulogne on a general tour of inspection of the Channel ports from Calais to Ostende. He left Joséphine occupied with the preparation of her toilettes for the visit which she was soon to make with him to the banks of the Rhine. He was to meet her the first of September at Aix-la-Chapelle, where the Empress was to precede him by several weeks for the purpose of taking the waters.

As was his custom, before leaving Saint-Cloud Napoleon dictated in the minutest details the itinerary of the journey of the Empress. Everything was worked out

with the same precision that he would have given to the orders for an army corps to arrive at a certain hour on the field of battle. He also dictated the replies that Joséphine was to make to the addresses of welcome that she would receive at the different cities through which she passed. Every day, before her departure, Joséphine could be seen, a large page of manuscript in her hand, trying to commit these discourses to memory, as a school-girl learns her lesson. Fortunately her replies were brief, and she soon knew them by heart.

Joséphine's life at Aix was very monotonous. After the morning toilette, the Empress went to the thermal establishment for a bath. An hour of rest followed, and then she dressed for breakfast. In the afternoon she usually went out for a drive. Upon her return she again changed her robe for dinner. In the evening, unless she went to the theatre, she retired at an early hour.

It will be interesting here to read one of the letters written at this time by Napoleon to Joséphine, if only for the purpose of comparing it with the ardent effusions he sent her during the Campaign of Italy:

To the Empress, at Aix-la-Chapelle

CALAIS, 6 August 1804

Mon amie, I am at Calais since midnight; but expect to leave for Dunkerque this evening. I am satisfied with my inspection, and in quite good health. I trust that the waters will do you as much good as the sight of the camp and the sea has done me. Eugène has left for Blois. Hortense is well. Louis is at Plombières. I long to see you. You are ever necessary to my happiness. A thousand best wishes.

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After a visit of nine days at Aix, where he arrived on the 2 September, Napoleon left with Joséphine for Cologne. From there they travelled separately to Mayence, which they reached on the 20 September. At Mayence the sovereigns received the warmest of welcomes. The houses and public buildings were all illuminated in their honor. The Emperor found himself surrounded by a regular court of German princes. Performances were given by the second company of the Théâtre-Français, which had been summoned from Paris.

On the 12 October the Emperor and Empress were once more back at Saint-Cloud. This visit to the banks of the Rhine made a great impression on France, and indeed on all Europe. No theatrical manager ever had a greater talent than Napoleon for what may be called the art of the *mise en scène*. The stage was now set for the Coronation, and the curtain was about to rise on one of the grandest spectacles the world has ever seen.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1804–1805

THE CORONATION

Cardinal Fesch Sent to Rome — The Pope Consents to Go to Paris — Astonishment of Madame Mère — Joséphine's Triumph Over the Bonapartes — Preparations for the Ceremony — The Pope Arrives at Fontainebleau — Joséphine's Confession — The Excitement at Paris — Isabey's Ingenious Idea — Religious Marriage of Napoleon and Joséphine — The Procession to the Cathedral — The Ceremony at Notre-Dame — Joséphine Crowned by the Emperor — Her Joy — A Series of Fêtes — Baptism of Napoleon-Louis

DURING his absence from Paris the Emperor had not lost sight of his plans for the Coronation, and had sent his uncle Cardinal Fesch to Rome as a special ambassador. He was to arrange with the Pope to come to Paris to crown the new Charlemagne in his capital. If the Holy Father consented, Fesch had full powers to arrange with him all the details of the ceremony.

After much hesitation the Pope finally agreed to yield to the wishes of the Emperor and go to Paris. This unheard-of act of condescension filled the new sovereign with delight. The political consequences to him were enormous: on the one hand, it assured his standing with the large Catholic population of France, and on the other, it legitimized his title in the eyes of the other sovereigns of Europe, and put an end to the claims of the Bourbons.

The visit of the Pope to Paris was an event so extraordinary as to seem to every one almost incredible. When the report was first spread abroad, Madame Letitia, who was now called Madame Mère, was simply astounded at the thought that the Pope, *il santissimo Padre,* should condescend to make the journey to Paris to crown her *bambino Napoleone* as Emperor of the French! The good woman could hardly realize it.

No one had followed the negotiations with more interest than Joséphine. For her the important question was, would she be crowned with the Emperor? This, she thought, would mean an assured future, with no more worry over the perpetually recurring menace of divorce, which empoisoned her entire existence. As she had anticipated, the Bonapartes took this occasion to renew their efforts to persuade Napoleon to repudiate his wife, and this time they might have gained their end if they had used more tact. But they went too far in their attacks on Joséphine, and as usual only succeeded in arousing their brother's wrath. In this crisis, Joséphine displayed so much grief, and at the same time so much submission to his wishes, that Napoleon could not bring himself to the point of repudiating her. " He took Joséphine in his arms, and told her effusively that he would never have the strength to part with her, even though public policy demanded it; then he promised her that she should be crowned with him, and receive at his side, from the hands of the Pope, the divine consecration." Monsieur Thiers, in relating this incident, adds that he took it from the manuscript of the unpublished memoirs of a reliable person attached

to the imperial family, who was an eye-witness of the scene.

The preparations for the Coronation were on a grand scale, and nothing was left undone to make the spectacle imposing and memorable. The costumes were designed by the great painters David and Isabey. The crown of the Emperor, modelled upon that of Charlemagne, was made by Foncier, the leading jeweller of Paris, and was a wonderful work of art. It can still be seen in the Gallery of Apollo at the Louvre.

In order to have the ceremony as perfect as possible, there were several " dress-rehearsals " held at Notre-Dame. David arranged the groups, and the scenes were repeated until each one knew his rôle perfectly. The painter profited by these rehearsals to make the sketches for his great painting of the Coronation, afterwards ordered by the Emperor, which now hangs in the Louvre. When some one said later to David that in his painting he had made Joséphine absurdly young, he replied: " Go and tell her so! "

For the Coronation two dates had been considered: first, the 14 July, anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and second, the 9 November, the day of the 18 Brumaire, when Bonaparte overthrew the Directory. But both of these dates were manifestly inappropriate, and the delay of the Pope in reaching a decision finally caused the day to be set for the first week in December.

On the second day of November, the Pope, Pius the Seventh, then sixty-two years of age, left Rome for his long and tiresome journey to Paris. At the same time Napoleon was hurrying the work on the château of Fontainebleau, so that it should be ready to receive the

Holy Father on his arrival. As if by magic, in less than three weeks the palace was redecorated and refurnished, with all its former splendor.

The Pope was expected to arrive on Sunday the 25 November. To avoid all ceremony, Napoleon, dressed in hunting costume, left the palace an hour before noon, and directed his horse to the part of the forest by which the Pope was to arrive. As soon as his carriage stopped, on meeting the Emperor, the Pope descended, and Napoleon dismounted. The two illustrious sovereigns embraced cordially, and then entered the Emperor's carriage, which had been sent to meet them.

At the door of the palace, the Empress and the grand dignitaries of the Court were gathered, to meet the Supreme Pontiff. Dressed in a long white *soutane,* which fell around him like the drapery of an antique statue, with his face devoid of color, the Pope had a most ethereal air. His handsome and noble countenance, his sweet expression, his soft but resonant voice, produced a strong impression.

The two sovereigns dined together, and the Pope retired at an early hour, to rest after the fatigues of so long a journey. The following day Joséphine managed to have a confidential interview with the Pope, during which she confided to him the fact that she and Napoleon were only united by a civil bond. She prayed him to use all his influence with the Emperor to have him put an end to this situation which was filling her heart with remorse! " Rest in peace, my daughter," he said on retiring, " that will be arranged."

On Thursday the Pope made his entry into Paris, where he was received with the same honors accorded

the Emperor. He was lodged at the Tuileries in the Pavillon de Flore, which had been prepared specially for his reception. He arrived at the palace about eight o'clock in the evening, in the same carriage with the Emperor. Joséphine, who left Fontainebleau in the morning, had reached Paris a few hours earlier.

All Paris was excited over the approach of the great day. The hotels were crowded with strangers who had come from far and near to be present at the ceremony. All the shops were working night and day to have the uniforms and the robes ready in time. The ladies were to wear ball-dresses, with trains, with a collerette of blond lace called *cherusque,* which, fastened upon the two shoulders and rising quite high behind the head, recalled the fashions of the time of Catherine de Médicis. The costumes of the men were also very rich.

A week before the ceremony the painter Isabey received from the Emperor an order to make seven sketches, representing the number of principal scenes in the spectacle at the cathedral. To prepare seven such designs, each containing over a hundred figures, in the short time at his disposal, was manifestly out of the question. In this dilemma Isabey conceived the ingenious idea of purchasing a hundred dolls and dressing them to represent the various personages. These he placed in a plan in relief of the interior of Notre-Dame, and took them to the Emperor. Napoleon was much amused and also much pleased at this solution of the problem, and the miniature stage with the puppets was used to instruct the actors as to their rôles in the spectacle.

The Pope kept his promise to Joséphine, and, on the

night before the Coronation, Cardinal Fesch, at an altar erected in the Emperor's cabinet, performed the religious marriage of Napoleon and Joséphine. No witnesses were present, but after the ceremony the cardinal gave Joséphine a formal certificate of her marriage, which she always carefully guarded.

At last the great day arrived. The second of December dawned cold and foggy, but the bright sun soon dissipated the mists. At an early hour the streets were crowded with spectators, and windows along the route of the procession rented as high as three hundred francs.

Before the departure for Notre-Dame the ladies of the palace were introduced to the apartment of the Empress. Their costumes were very brilliant, but they paled before those of the Imperial family. Joséphine, resplendent with diamonds, her hair dressed in the mode of Louis Quatorze, did not appear over twenty-five. She wore a robe and court mantle of silver brocade, embroidered with golden bees, the Imperial emblem. She had a head-band of diamonds, a necklace, earrings, and a girdle, of very great value, all of which she wore with her accustomed grace.

The Pope left the Tuileries at nine o'clock in a carriage drawn by eight dapple-grey horses. According to Roman usage he was preceded by one of his *cameriers*, mounted upon a mule, and bearing a large cross. This unaccustomed sight greatly amused the Parisians.

The Emperor and Empress started over an hour later. Their carriage, which is still preserved in the museum of the Grand-Trianon at Versailles, was drawn by eight cream-colored horses, covered with brilliant harnesses. It was decorated with allegorical paintings on a gold

background, and all the panels were of glass, so that the sovereigns could be seen from every side. They left the Tuileries by way of the Carrousel, and followed the Rue Saint-Honoré, as the Rue de Rivoli was not then completed. Marshal Murat, at the head of twenty squadrons of cavalry, led the way, and eighteen six-horse carriages followed, with the principal personages of the Court. The streets were guarded by a double line of infantry, who kept back the crowds.

Arrived at the palace of the archbishop, Napoleon put on the coronation costume. Over a narrow robe of white satin, he wore a heavy mantle of crimson velvet. On his head he placed a crown of golden laurels; on his neck, the collar of the Légion d'honneur, in diamonds; at his side, a sword ornamented with the Regent diamond.

After the High Mass, the Pope blessed the Imperial ornaments, and then returned them to the Emperor: the ring, which he placed upon his finger; the sword, which he replaced in its sheath; the mantle, which was attached to his shoulders by the chamberlains; then the sceptre and the "hand of justice," which he gave to the Arch-Treasurer and the Arch-Chancellor.

The only ornament which remained to be handed to the Emperor was the crown. As the Pope was about to proceed with this final act of the ceremony, Napoleon took from his hands the emblem of supreme power and proudly placed it himself upon his head.

It had been arranged that the train of the mantle of the Empress should be borne by the five Imperial princesses: Julie and Hortense, the wives of Joseph and Louis, and the three sisters of the Emperor, Élisa,

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Pauline and Caroline. It was not without violent protests that Napoleon's sisters accepted this "servile" rôle.

When the moment arrived for Joséphine to take her part in the ceremony, she arose and advanced towards the steps of the altar, where the Emperor awaited her. All the ladies of the palace arose at the same time, and the princesses who formed her "service d'honneur" proceeded to perform their duty. The mantle of the Empress, of red velvet embroidered with golden bees, and lined with ermine, was very heavy, and the rôle of the princesses was far from being merely honorary. The three sisters entirely neglected their part and the Empress was unable to move forward. The quick eye of Napoleon at once took in the situation, and a few sharp words to his sisters quelled the mutiny.

Arrived before the altar, Joséphine knelt, joined her hands, and gracefully bowed her form. Napoleon then placed upon her head the small closed crown surmounted by a cross; he even seemed to take a loving pleasure in carefully arranging it upon her hair. Joséphine had never been so happy, or seemed so charming as on this occasion. Isabey, who had touched up her features with his painter's art, had removed the traces of time, and she looked fifteen years younger than her real age. The head of Joséphine in David's well known painting is a faithful representation of her appearance on this day.

Mlle. Avrillon writes in her *Mémoires:* "Never have I seen upon any countenance an expression of joy, of satisfaction, of happiness, which could be compared to that which animated the face of the Empress: she was radiant! The crown placed upon her brow by the hands

of her august spouse had assured her future, and seemed for all time to have ended the rumors of divorce with which she had been so often tormented."

After the ceremony the procession returned to the Tuileries by way of the boulevards and the present Rue Royale, and entered the palace from the Gardens. The day had been long and tiresome, and Napoleon was glad to resume his modest uniform of colonel of the Chasseurs de la Garde. He dined alone with Joséphine, whom he begged to retain the diadem which she wore so gracefully, and which became her so well. He was in excellent humor, and paid his wife a thousand compliments, saying that she was the most charming empress in the world!

The Coronation was followed by a series of fêtes. On the 5 December the Emperor distributed to the Army the Imperial eagles. The ceremony took place on the Champ-de-Mars in the presence of the Empress and all the high dignitaries of the Empire. Unfortunately the weather was terrible: an icy rain fell in torrents, and the field was a sea of mud. Notwithstanding the storm, the streets along the route of the procession were crowded with spectators. In the evening there was a grand banquet, served in the Galerie de Diane at the Tuileries. The table of the sovereigns was placed on a magnificent dais: the Empress was seated in the centre, with the Emperor at her right, and the Pope at her left.

Of all the entertainments, the finest was that given by the marshals at the Opéra on the 7 January 1805. The hall was transformed into a magnificent ball-room, by a floor built over the parquet on a level with the stage. The marshals arrived at eight o'clock, the Em-

press at ten, and the Emperor an hour later. After a concert, the ball was opened by Prince Louis, Marshal Murat, Eugène de Beauharnais, and Marshal Berthier, who danced with the four Imperial princesses. The Emperor twice made the tour of the room, and then retired at an early hour.

The last of the fêtes was the baptism on the 24 March at Saint-Cloud of Napoleon-Louis, the second son of Louis and Hortense. The ceremony was performed by the Pope himself, a week before his departure for Rome. Joséphine had been the god-mother of the older boy, but on this occasion Madame Mère was chosen to fill the rôle. Joséphine was entirely satisfied, as this baptism seemed to seal the reconciliation between the two families, and assure her future, as well as that of her grandson.

From this date, up to the time of the divorce, there were no more solemn baptisms. Napoleon and Joséphine indeed promised to give their names to many children, but the Emperor always put off the ceremony, which finally took place at Fontainebleau in November 1810. But on this occasion there was another *marraine,* and the numerous *Joséphines* were presented at the font by a new Empress, who was called Marie-Louise!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1804–1809

DAILY LIFE OF THE EMPRESS

Joséphine's Places of Residence — Her Apartments at the Tuileries — Her Frequent Alterations — Her Rooms at Saint-Cloud — Her Daily Routine — Her Personal Attendants — Her Toilette — Her Lingerie and Robes — Her Lavish Expenditures — Her Debts Paid by the Emperor — Her Life at the Tuileries

ABANDONING for a moment the chronological sequence of events, let us endeavor to depict Joséphine's mode of life during the time that her career was linked with the Empire: from the 18 May 1804, when she was saluted as Empress at Saint-Cloud, to the 15 December 1809, when her marriage was dissolved at the Tuileries. To Frédéric Masson, of the Académie Française, we owe many interesting details of the existence of the Empress at this time.

During these five years and a half, Joséphine passed less than twelve months in all at the Tuileries; she lived thirteen months at Saint-Cloud, eight at Malmaison, and four at Fontainebleau. She went twice to Plombières and once to Aix-la-Chapelle for the baths; she lived six months at Strasbourg and four at Mayence; she visited Germany, Italy and Belgium, the borders of the Rhine, and all of the centre and south of France. To follow her in her journeys, to trace her itinerary,

would be both tedious and unprofitable; wherever she lived her surroundings were practically the same, and the details of her daily life never varied.

In the endeavor to emancipate himself from a part of the slavery to which the sovereigns of France had always submitted, Napoleon divided his existence into two parts: one, the exterior, which belonged to the public; the other, the interior, which was intimate and private. The first had for its theatre the State apartments, the second was passed in the private rooms. But for the Empress this division was more apparent than real: the two lives were constantly overlapping.

Now that the Tuileries have been destroyed for fifty years, it is difficult to give any clear idea of the apartments occupied by Joséphine, and especially so as she was continually changing the arrangement of the rooms. The " Appartement d'honneur " of the Empress was entered from the Carrousel at the corner of the Pavillon de Flore. The windows in the salons were so high from the floor that a person, when seated, could not see out; but Napoleon would allow no alterations made, as it would have injured the appearance of the façade of the palace. On the other side, the private rooms, which faced on the Gardens, were only separated from the public sidewalk by a low terrace, and it was possible for any passerby to see into the windows. Again the the Emperor refused to have any change made which would have deprived the Parisians of the privilege of passing through the Gardens. It was not until the days of the " people's king," Louis-Philippe, that the windows were cut down, and a part of the Gardens was reserved.

The private apartment of Joséphine comprised only a library, a bedroom, a dressing-room and bath-room. All these rooms, on the ground floor, faced on the Gardens, and were the same that Joséphine and Hortense had occupied when they first came to the Tuileries. The personal suite of the Emperor, on the first floor, was reached by several private staircases, one of which ascended from Joséphine's bedchamber. These stairways were so narrow that two persons could not pass. The rooms on the Gardens were separated from those on the court by a long dark corridor. Above a part of Joséphine's suite there was a mezzanine floor, or entresol, in which were located her wardrobes.

The decorations of her apartment, made at the beginning of the Consulate, had never pleased Joséphine, who wished, above all, to have a handsome bedroom. Accordingly, when she was absent in Germany in 1806, her rooms were entirely redecorated and refurnished by Fontaine, in a truly imperial style, at a cost of one hundred thousand francs. But Joséphine considered the work frightful, and a year later gave orders to have it all done over, to suit her own taste. In the budget of 1808, the Emperor allowed a credit of sixty thousand francs for this work, but the final cost exceeded a quarter of a million. This time the architects, discouraged by so many contradictory orders, decided to follow their own ideas. When Joséphine returned from Bayonne the work was all finished. She was furious because her orders had been disregarded: the decorations were " heavy and out of style "; the furniture was " too plain and too cheap." She went to live at the Élysée, and, with her numerous absences from Paris, never

again occupied the Tuileries for more than three months up to the day of her divorce. At the time of his second marriage, therefore, Napoleon did not think it necessary to make any great alterations for Marie-Louise in the rooms which Joséphine had hardly used.

The arrangement of Joséphine's rooms at Saint-Cloud was very similar to that at the Tuileries, except that they were located on the first floor, and were decorated in a more modern and more feminine style. Napoleon, who liked everything severe, but handsome, was not pleased with the furniture, which he did not consider in accord with the majesty of his person and his reign. He said that Joséphine's apartment was fit only for a " fille entretenue." Most of the visitors did not agree with this opinion: they considered the rooms in good taste, and much pleasanter than those in the Tuileries. On the walls were hung many fine paintings taken from the Musée Napoléon. In the salon of the Empress there was a handsome portrait of Madame Mère by Gérard. But what attracted the most attention was a large mirror in one piece, over the mantel: this was mounted on a back of solid silver, which disappeared when a spring was pressed, and furnished a fine perspective of the park, with the fountains, the vases and statues.

The chamber of Joséphine was particularly attractive, with the bed, in the form of a small boat, of mahogany ornamented with gilded bronze; and mirrors on all sides. The bath-room was entirely in marble, with painted antique friezes.

At Saint-Cloud the etiquette was somewhat relaxed, and the life more private. It was possible to walk in the

restricted gardens, and to make extended excursions in carriages, through the park and in the neighborhood, particularly to Malmaison.

To give an idea of the tastes and occupations of Joséphine, we will trace briefly the routine of one day. If the Emperor had passed the night in her apartment, he rose at eight o'clock, and, at Paris, ascended, or at Saint-Cloud, descended to his own rooms: only, at Saint-Cloud, there was no private staircase, and he was forced to pass through a long corridor to reach the public stairway.

Then the Empress' women entered and drew the curtains. For her first repast, Joséphine drank, in bed, a cup of infusion or a lemonade. She always wore a night-cap of percale or embroidered muslin, trimmed with lace. Although she had no end of night-dresses, she usually wore a chemise, over which at night she put on a camisole. The door was then opened for the entrance of her favorite pug dog, Fortuné, an ugly mongrel cur. This was a successor to the dog of the same name under whose collar she concealed her letters at the Carmes in 1794: that one had been killed at Montebello.

Never later than nine o'clock, Joséphine enters her dressing-room, where she always passes at least three hours of her day, for she never neglects the mysterious rites of her toilette. Under the Empire, Joséphine had no less than twelve attendants to care for her person and her wardrobe, but the two *premières femmes* were only there for the etiquette, and had few functions to perform beyond drawing their salary of six thousand francs. The four *femmes de chambre* were pretty young

girls, who after the end of 1805 were called *dames d'annonce.* Two of them were in service every other week, and their duty was to announce to the Empress the persons who called upon her. Their salary was three thousand francs a year. The real attendants of Joséphine were, the *garde d'atours,* Madame Mallet, and the four *femmes de garde-robe,* of whom one was Mlle. Avrillon, who, in her *Mémoires,* calls herself " première femme de chambre de l'Impératrice." These women were the ones who entered into the familiarity of the Empress, and were most in her confidence. To them Joséphine intrusted not only her jewels and her robes, but also her most secret thoughts. To them she made presents of five hundred or a thousand francs at a time, gave them dots when they were married, and a pension when they retired. While guarding her rank, Joséphine always treated these attendants with the greatest kindness and politeness, and naturally she was adored by them.

For Joséphine, the rites of her toilette were long and complicated. She always took a bath every day, which was rather unusual at that time. But the most important act was to *faire sa tête,* to efface the ravages of time. In those days it was customary for all society women to employ rouge, but Joséphine carried it to excess: not content with putting a little on her cheeks, she covered her entire face with powder and rouge. The eye of Napoleon was so accustomed to this excess of color that he thought any woman who did not show it must be ill: " Go and put on some rouge, Madame," he said to one, " you look like a corpse." On the other hand, Napoleon could not endure the scent of

any perfume except a little lavender water or eau de Cologne.

The intricate details of her toilette completed, Joséphine dresses for the morning. From her five hundred chemises, she selects one of muslin, percale, or batiste, embroidered at the bottom, and trimmed at the neck and sleeves with Malines or Valenciennes. The plainest ones cost a hundred francs, and some of them three times that amount. As Joséphine changes all her linen three times a day, the number of the garments is not so extraordinary.

She almost always wears white silk stockings, costing from twenty to seventy francs a pair: no garters, as the new silk stockings stay in place. In the morning she puts on house shoes of taffetas or satin, at eight francs the pair, of which she orders over five hundred a year. She usually wears a light corset of lined percale trimmed with Valenciennes, for which she pays about forty francs. After the corset she puts on a flimsy petticoat of percale trimmed with her favorite lace. That is all, absolutely all: " Joséphine n'a dans sa garde-robe que deux pantalons en soie de couleur chair pour monter à cheval."

When Joséphine has put on a peignoir, her coiffeur, Herbault, is introduced. He is an important personage, in embroidered costume, with a sword by his side, and receives in salary and gifts eight thousand francs a year. But Herbault is only employed on ordinary occasions: for days of ceremony there is Duplan, who is paid twelve thousand francs, and later, in the time of Marie-Louise, receives the magnificent salary of forty-two thousand francs. It is impossible to attempt to describe the

coiffures employed by Joséphine, for they varied from day to day. Her hair was of a decidedly auburn shade, and in color and thickness remained the same to the end of her life.

After these first details, which had consumed much time, there was a regular council of war as to the robe, the hat and the wrap to be selected. In summer her dresses were of muslin, batiste or percale, and she had over two hundred to select from; in winter she wore cloth or velvet gowns, of which she had no less than six or seven hundred in her wardrobe! To wear with these costumes there were endless wraps, of every possible material, mostly trimmed with the rarest and most expensive furs.

Joséphine always wore a hat in the morning, and frequently also in the evening. Her choice was limited to two hundred and fifty, all different in form, color, and trimming!

Twice a year she went carefully through her wardrobe, and gave away a large part of her collection. Most of the articles, some of which she had never used, were presented to her femmes de chambre; but even Madame Mère and the Queens of Naples and Westphalia, did not disdain to accept such gifts.

In six years Joséphine spent for her wardrobe the enormous sum of a million and a half, and this did not include accounts not settled, or costumes for ceremonies like the Coronation, for which the Emperor made her a special allowance. In addition, during the same period, she spent over five million francs for jewelry. When Napoleon, after her divorce, paid up all her debts, her total expenditures for the six years reached the enor-

mous total of 6,647,580 francs, or an average of more than a million francs a year! When we consider that the Empress had the use of the finest Crown jewels in the world, valued at over five millions, it is difficult to understand why she made all these purchases for her own private collection. Her motive does not seem to have been to accumulate a reserve, for use in case of necessity, but rather a real mania for spending money. Her collection, which she left to Hortense, was appraised after her death at over four million francs, which was probably a third less than the actual value.

We have at first hand the story of the scene which preceded the first payment of her debts in 1806. Joséphine came to the table with tears in her eyes. Napoleon leaned over and whispered to her:

"Well, Madame, you are in debt."

No reply except a sob.

"You owe a million."

"No, Sire, I swear that I only owe six hundred thousand."

"Only that, you say; does that seem to you only a bagatelle?"

He adds a few words of reproach, and she begins to sob louder than ever. Then he whispers again:

"Come! Joséphine, come, my little one, do not cry, compose yourself."

And the debts are paid.

After she was dressed Joséphine received her physician. She had a constitution of iron, and was rarely ill, but she was a "malade imaginaire," and was always taking medicine. Corvisart, the chief physician of the

Emperor, generally succeeded in curing her by a prescription made up of bread pills!

At eleven o'clock precisely, for she was punctuality personified, Joséphine entered the Salon Jaune, where were introduced the ladies she had invited for déjeuner. The menu, which was usually prepared for ten persons, comprised a soup, two relevés, six entrées, two roasts, six entremêts, and six dishes of dessert. A bottle of Beaune and two bottles of fine Bourgogne were served. Coffee was taken at the table, and a half-bottle of liqueur was provided.

Joséphine, who ate but little, did the honors with charming courtesy, drawing out her guests to tell her all the latest gossip of the city and the Court, which the Emperor was always interested in hearing repeated. Napoleon usually took a hasty breakfast on a little table in his cabinet, but sometimes he came down and joined his wife's party.

After breakfast Joséphine returned to the salon. To walk in the Gardens was impossible, and the only exercise she took at Paris was an occasional game of billiards. She rarely read anything, and never called upon her ladies to read for her. But she was fond of conversation, and there was always some one with whom to talk.

At five o'clock Joséphine went to her rooms to change her toilette for dinner, which was served at the early hour of six o'clock. She changed completely, and selected an evening gown, which was always very décolleté. In the evening she always wore a great many jewels.

Her toilette finished, Joséphine waits for the préfet du palais to announce that the Emperor is ready to go

to dinner. Sometimes, absorbed in his work, Napoleon forgets that he has not dined, and she waits one hour, two, occasionlly three or four. She is never impatient, and never disturbs Napoleon at his work. She passes the time in conversation with her ladies. When the Emperor is ready she goes to the room where the dinner is served — sometimes in her apartment, and sometimes in that of Napoleon on the floor above. At Paris they usually dined alone, except Sundays, when there was a family party.

After dinner Napoleon always went to Joséphine's salon, where she herself served the coffee. Unless they were going out to the theatre, or there was a ball, concert or spectacle at the Château, which happened about twice a week, the Emperor remained for a short time, and talked with any dignitaries who had called. He then returned to his cabinet, and Joséphine passed the evening in conversation, or in a game of backgammon or whist, both of which games she played remarkably well.

Quite often the Emperor, after he had retired for the night, sent for her to read to him, as he loved the sound of her voice. As soon as he was asleep, she returned to her salon, and resumed her game. At midnight all visitors departed, and Joséphine made her toilette for the night, which took nearly as long as that of the morning. " In this also she was elegant," said the Emperor; " she was graceful even in going to bed."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1805

ITALY AND STRASBOURG

The Journey to Italy — Grand Review at Marengo — Napoleon's Reconciliation with Jérôme — The Coronation at Milan — The Emperor's Satisfaction — Eugène, Viceroy of Italy — Joséphine's Grief — Napoleon's Attachment to His Wife — The Fêtes at Genoa — Hurried Return to France — Joséphine at Plombières — The Austerlitz Campaign — Joséphine's Sojourn at Strasbourg — Her Life There — Napoleon's Letters During the Campaign

ON the 2 April 1805 Napoleon left Fontainebleau for Milan, where he was to be crowned as King of Italy. He had not intended to take Joséphine with him, but she pleaded so warmly that he finally yielded. The first night was spent at Troyes, and the following day the Emperor went alone to Brienne, to see the school where he had received his first education. He slept at the château, and the following morning, without any escort, he visited the old familiar scenes of his boyhood.

Following the usual route via Mâcon the imperial party reached Lyon a week later. In order not to fatigue the Empress, Napoleon had arranged to stop every night in some city, instead of travelling night and day as was his regular habit. The sovereigns usually stayed at the préfecture, where they found the dinner ready to serve, and the lodgings prepared by the servants sent in advance.

At Lyon they descended at the palace of the archbishop, Cardinal Fesch, who had recently been appointed to this see. The entire journey from Fontainebleau had been a triumphal march. The villagers had flocked from far and near to line the route and cheer their Emperor, with an enthusiasm which at that time was as sincere as it was spontaneous.

It was three hours after noon when the party entered Lyon, and the entire populace of the second city of France had gathered to acclaim the Emperor. Napoleon had done much to increase the prosperity of this large silk-manufacturing town, and he was extremely popular there.

After a sojourn of five days, they left for Turin by way of Mont-Cenis. The fine road over the Alps, constructed by Napoleon, was not yet completed, and, to cross the mountains, *chaises à porteur* were provided for the women, and mules for the men. The Pope, who had left Fontainebleau two days after the Emperor, was still at Turin, where he had stopped for a short rest on his way to Rome. As he occupied the palace, the Emperor deferred for several days his entry into the capital, and stopped at an old villa of the King of Sardinia a few miles from the city.

Before proceeding to Milan, the party turned aside to visit Alessandria. Here, the 5 May, the Emperor held a grand review on the field where five years before he had gained the great victory of Marengo. He had brought from Paris, and wore again on this occasion the old and faded uniform, the shapeless hat, and the heavy sabre, which recalled so many glorious memories. The manœuvres were directed by Eugène under the orders

of the Emperor, and Napoleon expressed to Joséphine his satisfaction with the manner in which her son had performed his task.

On the following day, Napoleon saw Jérôme for the first time since his brother's marriage. Jérôme had arrived at Lisbon with his wife during the month of April. He was allowed to land, but, under orders from the Emperor, she was forced to reëmbark for England. Jérôme was summoned to meet the Emperor in Italy, and travelled there post-haste. After a decisive interview with Napoleon, he basely agreed to abandon his wife and her unborn child, and was again restored to favor.

On the 8 May the Emperor entered Milan, where his welcome was not so spontaneous as in the cities of Piedmont. Napoleon was much disappointed at the lack of real enthusiasm, and spoke of it to Joséphine. His coronation as King of Italy took place on the 26 May in the cathedral. The weather was perfect, and the city was crowded with spectators. The ceremonies were similar to those at Notre-Dame, but on a much smaller scale. Cardinal Caprara, the Archbishop of Milan, officiated. Napoleon himself placed upon his head the celebrated Iron Crown of the ancient kings of Lombardy, at the same time using the traditional formula: " God gave it me; woe to him who touches it! " Joséphine, although she bore the title of Queen of Italy, was not crowned as at Paris, and was present at the ceremony only as a spectator.

" After our return to the palace," writes Mlle. Avrillon, " I was occupied in the room of the Empress when the Emperor entered. He was full of glee; he laughed,

rubbed his hands together, and said with great good humor: ' Well, mademoiselle, did you have a good view of the ceremony? Did you hear what I said in placing the crown upon my head? ' Then he repeated in nearly the same tone he had used in the cathedral: *Dieu me l'a donnée, gare à qui y touche!* I replied that nothing had escaped me. He was most amiable to me, and I have often remarked that when nothing disturbed the Emperor he was very familiar with the persons of his household; he spoke to us with a sort of *bonhomie,* of freedom, as if he were our equal. . . . Often he gave us a little tap, or pulled our ears: it was a favor which he did not accord to everybody; and we could judge of the extent of his good humor by the greater or less degree of pain that he caused us. . . . Very frequently he did the same to the Empress when we were dressing her: he gave her some taps playfully upon the shoulders. It was useless for her to cry: *Finis donc, finis donc, Bonaparte!* he continued as long as the play amused him."

On the 10 June the Emperor announced the appointment of Eugène as Viceroy of Italy. This elevation of her son, which should have delighted Joséphine, was only a cause of chagrin. She shed tears at the thought of being separated from her child. One day when the Emperor found her very sad he said: "You weep, Joséphine: it is not reasonable. Do you cry because you are going to be separated from your son? If the absence of your children causes you so much grief, judge what I myself must endure! The attachment to them which you show makes me cruelly feel the misfortune of not having any." These words were far from assuaging the

grief of the Empress: they raised once more the dreaded spectre of divorce. Napoleon certainly had no idea of increasing her grief, and Joséphine could not let him see what an interpretation she put upon his speech. "The Emperor," says Mlle. Avrillon, "was one of the best husbands that I have ever known; when the Empress was indisposed he passed by her side all the time that he could take from his affairs. He always came to her before retiring, and very often when he awoke during the night, he came himself, or sent his Mameluke to have news of Her Majesty. He had for her the most tender regard, and it is only true to say that she fully returned it. . . . Nothing that I say here would seem exaggerated if others, like myself, could have witnessed the proofs of affection which they both displayed; and I am certain that when political reasons forced them to separate, all the grief was not on one side."

On the 10 June the Emperor left Milan for a visit to the Austrian frontier and the famous Quadrilateral, the scene of so many of his brilliant victories. Three days later he held another grand review of his troops on the battle-field of Castiglione. Joséphine took advantage of his absence to make with a few attendants the tour of the Italian lakes. She was happy to be free for a few days from the irksome etiquette which the presence of the Emperor always imposed.

On her return to Milan, she dismissed most of her suite, who were to leave directly for Paris, and with a few attendants proceeded to Bologna, where she rejoined the Emperor. In this city the new sovereigns of Italy received a very warm greeting, which partially atoned for the coldness of the Milanais. On the last day

of June the party arrived at Genoa, well named the Superb, where they had a brilliant reception. During the following week there was a succession of magnificent fêtes to celebrate the incorporation of the ancient republic in the French Empire.

Late on the 6 July a special courier from Paris brought to the Emperor the news of the formation of the Third Coalition, and at ten o'clock that evening he set out for Turin, where he arrived early on the following morning. He then told the Empress of his intention to start the next day post-haste for Paris, leaving her to follow him more leisurely. Joséphine begged to accompany him, and the Emperor finally consented, on her promise not to have one of her headaches!

The party started in three carriages — one for the Emperor and Empress, another for the grand officers of the household, and a third for the service — with a small escort of cavalry. But after crossing Mont-Cenis, the Emperor travelled so rapidly that the other carriages and the escort were left far behind. Napoleon and Joséphine reached Fontainebleau about ten o'clock on the night of the 11 July, after an absence of exactly one hundred days. Four days later the Emperor wrote Eugène: " I arrived eighty-five hours after my departure from Turin. Nevertheless I lost three hours on Mont-Cenis and I stopped constantly on account of the Empress. One or two hours to breakfast and one or two hours to dine made me lose eight or ten hours more." The express trains via the Mont-Cenis tunnel now make the run of about 440 miles in fourteen hours. Allowing for the delays of which he speaks, and the longer distance by road, the Emperor made the trip in about

seventy hours, at the rate of nearly seven miles an hour.

The arrival of the Emperor at Fontainebleau was so unexpected that there was no one to receive him except the concierge of the palace, an old servant named Gaillot, who had been his cook in Egypt. "Come, my good fellow," said the Emperor, "you must resume your old calling; you must get us some supper." Fortunately Gaillot had in his larder some mutton chops and some eggs, and Napoleon and Joséphine ate the simple repast with a good appetite.

A week later the Emperor reached Saint-Cloud, while the thunder of the cannon of the Invalides announced his return to the capital. The same evening, after a call on Madame Mère, the sovereigns attended the Opéra, where they received a warm welcome from the audience.

On the second day of August the Emperor left Saint-Cloud for a month's tour of inspection of the Grand Army, which was in cantonments along the Channel, prepared for a descent on England. Here, ten days later, he received news that Admiral Villeneuve, after an indecisive action with the English fleet off Ferrol, had set sail for Cadiz, instead of Brest, as ordered. Losing no time in vain regrets over the failure of his well-laid plans, Napoleon called Daru to his headquarters at Pont-de-Brique at four o'clock in the morning, and dictated at one sitting the plan of the Austrian campaign as far as Vienna.

In the meantime Joséphine had gone to her favorite watering-place, Plombières, to take the baths. What a marvellous change in her fortunes since her earlier visit as Madame Bonaparte after the departure of her hus-

band for Egypt! Then, after her accident, she was almost alone, and Hortense was called in haste from Saint-Germain to nurse her mother. Now a company of infantry is sent to escort Her Majesty from Nancy to Plombières; there are receptions by authorities civil and military, addresses and salutes; triumphal arches at the gates of the cities; at Plombières, illuminations and fireworks. She is accompanied by a préfet du palais, an écuyer d'honneur, a dame d'honneur and two dames du palais, five femmes de chambre, and a score or more of servants. The charges for the post, going and coming, amount to nearly forty thousand francs, and the entire expenses of the trip total over 134,000 francs.

By way of diversion, Joséphine had her portrait painted by a very popular artist named Laurent whom she met at Plombières. For this small full-length portrait, eighteen inches by fifteen, she paid six thousand francs. Except for a few excursions in the neighborhood this was the only occupation of her days. At Bondy, on her return, she was greeted by the prefect and all the authorities. She survived the addresses, and without any escort continued her journey to Malmaison, which she reached the last of August.

On the 24 September, between four and five o'clock in the morning, accompanied by Joséphine, Napoleon left Saint-Cloud to put himself at the head of the Grand Army, which exactly four weeks before had begun its march from the Channel to the Rhine. The journey of 315 miles to Strasbourg was made in sixty hours without any stop. In accompanying the Emperor to Strasbourg, and taking up her residence there, Joséphine's thought was, " to escape from the Parisian addresses

which bored her; from the surveillance of her brothers-in-law; and from the ennui of the palace of Saint-Cloud." She was amused with a new entertainment.

In the ancient capital of Alsace, Joséphine lived in the episcopal mansion at the foot of the cathedral. It was a real palace, completed in 1741, and entirely modern in its appointments. Built by the first bishop of the house of Rohan, Armand-Gaston, cardinal and grand almoner, it had been visited by Louis the Fifteenth in 1744, and had received Marie-Antoinette on her arrival in France as Dauphine in 1770. Sold early in the Revolution as national property, it had been bought by the city and become the seat of the municipal administration. After the foundation of the Empire the city had offered the palace to the State as one of the " four imperial residences to be established at the four principal points of the Empire." From Boulogne, the Emperor had ordered Duroc to send Fontaine to Strasbourg to put the mansion in order to receive him. In less than two weeks the architect cleared out the clerks and the archives; cleaned, redecorated and refurnished the palace — all at a cost not much exceeding two hundred thousand francs. Furniture was collected from the neighboring cities and châteaux; linen, glass and silver were sent from Paris. Three days before the Emperor's arrival all was ready, even to the carriages and horses in the stables.

The private suite of the Emperor, facing on the court, comprised five rooms, while in the rear, fronting on the terrace of the Ill, were the State apartments, seven magnificent salons on the first floor. On the first and second floors, there were fourteen small rooms at the

disposal of the Empress; the quarters were not very commodious, but she was satisfied.

The Emperor remained only four days at Strasbourg and then proceeded to the headquarters of the army. The life of Joséphine after his departure was one continual round of dinners, balls, concerts and spectacles. In two months Bausset, the prefect of the palace, paid out over two hundred thousand francs for the running expenses of the household. As the success of the Emperor became known there were visits from all of the South German princes. Joséphine received the homage rendered her; she missed no ceremony; she remained until the end of all the balls she gave, and had a smile and a polite word for every one.

Not content with enjoying all the pleasures of the city, Joséphine indulged to the limit her mania for spending. Everything that was offered, she bought: pictures, porcelains, plants, living animals — all of which went to swell her collection at Malmaison. With the expenses of the palace, she left over a million francs behind her in Strasbourg.

The story of the campaign of 1805 is told in the letters which Napoleon wrote almost daily. From every bivouac, from every field of battle, came one of his letters — not burning and delirious as nine years before, but full of tenderness and loving thought.

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

ETTLINGEN, 2 October 1805

I am still here and in good health. The grand manœuvres have begun; the army of Würtemberg and Baden is now united with mine. I am in a good position, and I love thee.

NAPOLEON

LUDWIGSBURG, 4 October

I leave to-night. There is nothing new. The Bavarians have united with my army. I am well. In a few days I hope to have something interesting to tell you. Take care of yourself, and believe me ever yours. . . .

NAPOLEON

LUDWIGSBURG, 5 October

I leave at once to continue my march. You will be five or six days without news of me: do not be anxious, for that is due to the operations which are about to take place. All goes well, and as I had expected. Adieu, mon amie, I love and embrace thee.

NAPOLEON

On the 6 October the Emperor surveyed the passage of the Danube at Donauwörth, and passed the night at Nördlingen, where on the following day he issued the first of the famous bulletins of the Grand Army. He remained in this vicinity for four days, directing the passage of the river by the troops of Murat, and the operations which followed. He reached Augsbourg on the night of the tenth, and lodged with the former Elector of Trèves.

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

AUGSBOURG, 10 October

I have been on the move for a week. The campaign has opened favorably. I am very well although it has rained nearly every day. Events have moved rapidly. I am sending to France 4000 prisoners and eight flags, and have fourteen cannon taken from the enemy. Adieu, mon amie, I embrace thee.

NAPOLEON

Two days later the French Army entered Munich in triumph, and the Emperor continued his correspondence:

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

AUGSBOURG, 12 October

The enemy is lost: everything presages the most fortunate campaign, the shortest and the most brilliant that I have ever made. I leave in an hour for Burgau. I am well, although the weather is frightful; I change my clothes twice a day. I love and embrace thee.

NAPOLEON

On the eve of the capitulation of Ulm, from his headquarters Napoleon sent the good news to Joséphine:

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

ELCHINGEN, 18 October

I have accomplished my purpose: I have destroyed the Austrian army by simple marches. I have made 60,000 prisoners, taken 120 cannon, more than 90 flags, and more than 30 generals. I am going to move on the Russians: they are lost. I am content with my army. I have lost only 1500 men, of whom two-thirds are but slightly wounded. Adieu, my Joséphine. A thousand good wishes for everybody. . . .

NAPOLEON

ELCHINGEN, 21 October

I am quite well, ma bonne amie. I am just starting for Augsbourg. Here 33,000 men have laid down their arms. I have from 60 to 70,000 prisoners, more than 90 flags, and 200 cannon. Never such a catastrophe in the annals of war! Take care of thyself. I am rather tired out. The weather for three days has been fine. . . .

NAPOLEON

AUGSBOURG, 23 October

The last two nights have rested me, and I leave to-morrow for Munich. . . . I long to see thee, but do not count upon my sending for thee unless there is an armistice or we go into winter quarters. Adieu, mon amie. A thousand kisses. . . .

NAPOLEON

MUNICH, 27 October

I have your letter, and see with regret that you were over-anxious. I have received reports which show all the tenderness you feel for me, but you must have more strength and confidence. . . . My health is quite good. You must not think of crossing the Rhine under two or three weeks. You must be gay; enjoy yourself, and hope that we shall see each other before the end of the month (Brumaire). . . . Adieu, ma bonne amie. A thousand best wishes for Hortense, Eugène, and the two Napoleons. . . .

NAPOLEON

HAAG (near WELS), 3 November

I am in the midst of a long march. The weather is very cold; the earth covered with a foot of snow, which is rather severe. Fortunately we are still in the midst of the forests, and there is plenty of wood. I am quite well, and would like to hear from you, and know that you are not anxious. . . .

NAPOLEON

LINZ, 5 November

The weather is fine. We are twenty-eight leagues from Vienna. . . . I long to see you. My health is good. I embrace you.

NAPOLEON

The Emperor of Austria, obliged to flee from his capital, had taken refuge at Brünn, where he joined the

Czar and his army. On the 13 November Napoleon entered Vienna, and took up his residence at Schœnbrunn.

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

VIENNA, 15 November

I have been here for two days, and am a little fatigued. I have not yet seen the city by day, but have been through it at night. Nearly all my troops are across the Danube in pursuit of the Russians. Adieu, my Joséphine. I will send for you as soon as possible. A thousand best wishes.

NAPOLEON

The following day the Emperor sent Joséphine the welcome message that he had made all the arrangements for her to proceed to Munich.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1805–1806

MARRIAGE OF EUGENE

Joséphine Leaves Strasbourg for Munich — Napoleon's Letters from Austerlitz — Joséphine's Selfishness — The Émperor Arrives at Munich — He Plans Three Family Alliances — Princesse Augusta of Bavaria — Prince Charles of Baden — Opposition to the Emperor's Projects — Duroc Presents the Official Demand — The Elector Finally Obtains His Daughter's Consent — Napoleon Summons Eugène — The Young Couple — The Marriage — Its Success — Napoleon's Reception at Paris — Marriage of Prince Charles and Stéphanie de Beauharnais

THE letter which Napoleon wrote to Joséphine from Vienna on the 16 November 1805 is interesting as showing how, in the midst of an arduous campaign, he thought of the smallest details of his wife's comfort and pleasure:

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

VIENNA, 16 November 1805

I am writing M. d'Harville that you are to set out for Munich, stopping at Baden and Stuttgart. At Stuttgart you will give the wedding present to the Princesse Paul. Fifteen or twenty thousand francs will be enough to pay: with the balance you can make presents at Munich to the daughters of the Elector of Bavaria. . . . Be kind, but receive all the homages: they owe you everything, but you owe them only kindness. The Electrice of Würtemberg is a daughter of the

King of England; she is a good woman, and you should treat her well, but without affectation. I shall be very glad to see you the moment my affairs permit. I am leaving for the front. The weather is frightful; it snows all the time. For the rest, all goes well. Adieu, ma bonne amie.

NAPOLEON

As soon as she received the permission of the Emperor, Joséphine made haste to start. At an early hour on the 28 November, with her suite, she left Strasbourg amidst the cheers of the populace, and the thunders of the cannon of the fortress. On her arrival at Carlsruhe the same evening, she was received with salvos of artillery; the château was illuminated and the Margrave was at the door to welcome her, with his entire Court. That evening there was a banquet, followed by a ball.

Two days later she left for Stuttgart, where she was received with the same honors. On the 3 December she continued her journey to Munich. All along the route, she passed under triumphal arches, and was welcomed with salutes. At Ulm, Marshal Augereau, who was in command, had arranged a parade, and a splendid fête for the evening, but the Empress had overtaxed her strength and was obliged to retire with a headache.

Passing through Augsbourg, she finally reach Munich, where she found awaiting her, at the gates of the city, the Court carriages, celebrated as chefs-d'œuvre of painting and sculpture. From the date of her arrival, on the 5 December, until the last day of the month, she was alone. The time passed quickly in a succession of entertainments of every kind, and Joséphine had scarcely a moment to herself.

While the Empress was on her way to Munich, Napo-

leon had won the great victory of Austerlitz, and finished his most brilliant campaign. His affectionate interest in Joséphine is displayed in the three letters which he sent her from the field of battle:

To the Empress, at Munich

AUSTERLITZ, 3 December 1805

I have beaten the Russian and Austrian armies commanded by the two Emperors. I am somewhat fatigued; I have bivouacked a week in the open air and the nights have been quite cold; to-night I sleep in the château of Prince Kaunitz. The Russian army is not only defeated but destroyed. I embrace thee.

NAPOLEON

AUSTERLITZ, 5 December

I have concluded a truce. The Russians are going back. The battle of Austerlitz is the finest that I have ever fought: 45 flags, more than 150 cannon, the standards of the Russian Guard, 20 generals, 30,000 prisoners, more than 20,000 killed — a horrible sight. The Emperor Alexander is in despair, and has set out for Russia. I met the Emperor of Germany yesterday at my bivouac, and talked with him for two hours: we have agreed to make peace quickly. . . . I am looking forward with great pleasure to the moment that I can join thee. Adieu, ma bonne amie. I am quite well, and I long to embrace thee.

NAPOLEON

AUSTERLITZ, 7 December

I have concluded an armistice; in a week peace will be made. I am anxious to know if you reached Munich in good health. . . . Adieu, mon amie, I long to see thee again.

NAPOLEON

But Joséphine was no more prompt in answering his letters than during the Campaign of Italy, and a few days later Napoleon wrote again:

To the Empress, at Munich

BRÜNN, 10 December

It is a long time since I have received any news of thee. Have the fine fêtes of Baden, Stuttgart and Munich made thee forget the poor soldiers covered with mud, drenched with rain and blood? I leave soon for Vienna. We are working to conclude peace. . . . I long to be near thee. Adieu, mon amie.

NAPOLEON

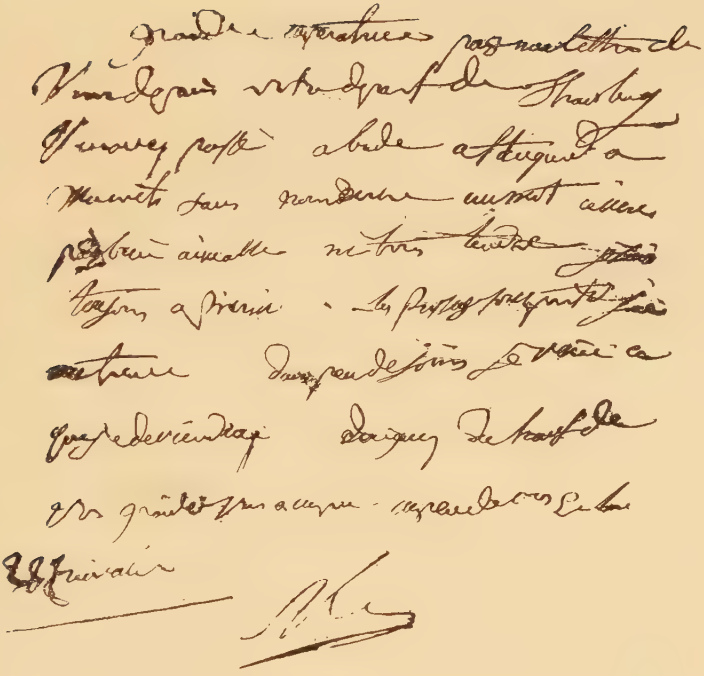
The silence of Joséphine still continued, and Napoleon addressed her once more, in a tone of wounded pleasantry:

VIENNA, 19 December

Great Empress, — Not a letter from you since your departure from Strasbourg. You have visited Baden, Stuttgart and Munich without writing us a word. That is neither kind nor affectionate. . . . Deign from the height of your grandeurs to bestow a thought upon your slaves.

NAPOLEON

The profound *égoisme* of Joséphine, and the affectionate kindness of Napoleon, were never displayed more clearly than during this separation of three months. While the Emperor was risking his life and his fortunes on the snow-bound plains of Moravia, Joséphine was amusing herself like a débutante at the brilliant Courts of the South German princes, without a



FACSIMILE OF LETTER OF NAPOLEON

thought for any one but herself. By her indifference and her infidelities she had long since killed the early passionate devotion of her husband, and the day was not far distant when reasons of State would force him to stifle the feelings of tender affection which still bound him to Joséphine, and reluctantly decide upon a divorce.

Finally Joséphine finds time to write, and pleads illness as the reason for her silence. Napoleon immediately replies in a tone of tender solicitude:

To the Empress, at Munich

SCHŒNBRUNN (VIENNA), 20 December

I have just received your letter of the 25 Frimaire (16 December). I am worried to learn that you are indisposed. It is not well to travel a hundred leagues at this season. I do not know what I shall do: it all depends on events; I have no volition; I await the issue. Remain at Munich. Have a good time: it is not difficult amidst such society, and in so fine a country. I am myself quite busy. In several days I shall have reached a decision. Adieu, mon amie. A thousand loving thoughts.

NAPOLEON

On the last day of December, at one-forty-five in the morning, Napoleon entered Munich under a triumphal arch. The following day the Elector was proclaimed King of Bavaria. The Treaty of Presburg, signed on the 26 December, gave to Bavaria, Würtemberg and Baden considerable increases of territory, also to the two electors the title of king, and Napoleon had determined that these aggrandizements should be paid for by three marriages: that of his step-son Eugène with the

Princesse Augusta of Bavaria; that of Prince Charles of Baden with Joséphine's cousin, Stéphanie de Beauharnais; and finally that of his brother Jérôme with the Princesse Catherine of Würtemberg.

Augusta was the only daughter of Maximilian, the new King of Bavaria, by his first wife. After her death he had married Caroline, the sister of Charles of Baden, to whom Augusta was now betrothed. The Wittelsbach family, one of the oldest and most distinguished in Europe, had ruled in Bavaria for eight centuries. But Maximilian had become Elector only a few years before, upon the extinction of the senior ruling lines of the family. Belonging to the cadet branch, and having no fortune, in his youth, before the Revolution, he had served in the French army, and commanded the Regiment of Alsace. The happiest days of his life had been passed in France, and he was very French in his sympathies. During the Austrian war his troops had fought with the Grand Army, and the Emperor now repaid his loyalty by raising him to the royal dignity.

The Margrave of Baden, then seventy-seven years of age, had lost his only son, and his heir was his grandson, Charles, a youth of twenty-two. One of the sisters of this young prince had married Alexander, the Czar of Russia, with whom Napoleon was still at war; another was the second wife of Maximilian, of whose daughter, Augusta, Prince Charles was himself the fiancé. Here indeed was a matrimonial tangle which it required all of the skill of Napoleon to unravel.

For some time past the Emperor had begun to lay plans for alliances with the reigning houses of Europe. With no children of his own, three of his brothers al-

ready married, and Jérôme for the moment unavailable, he had been obliged to fall back on the family of Joséphine. As early as the month of July 1804 he had charged his minister in Bavaria to make inquiries about the young daughter of the Elector, and let him know if there were any projects for her marriage. At that time Napoleon's plans were all in the air, but a year later they were definitely fixed. At Boulogne, in September 1805, he gave instructions to M. de Thiard, one of his chamberlains, to proceed to Munich and open negotiations. At the very outset Thiard encountered the obstacles already mentioned. The Elector, with all his French sympathies, could not undertake lightly to offend so many powerful dames, among whom the Emperor had few friends. To break alliances already projected, in order to conclude one with the " Corsican adventurer," was a difficult proposition. Another serious obstacle was the attachment which the young Princesse Augusta had formed for her fiancé.

Talleyrand, tired of seeing the negotiations drag along, and realizing the powerful effect of the Emperor's victories, now ordered Thiard to go directly to the Elector, and officially demand the alliance. " The Emperor," he wrote, " has no prince of his name available. Young Beauharnais is free. . . . Brother-in-law of an imperial prince, uncle of the one who will probably be called to the succession, step-son of the reigning Emperor, only son of the Empress, there is dignity for you! " Then he drives home his argument with the words: " It is not necessary for me to analyze the consequences, and to apply them, in order to be understood by the Elector of Bavaria."

It was not necessary, however, for Thiard to use these instructions, as the Elector had already reached a decision and sent his minister to see the Emperor at Linz, where all the arrangements were made on the 5 November.

But Napoleon was well aware that it was one thing to convince men, and quite another to win women to his cause: for this he counted on Joséphine. Ten days later he sent the Empress instructions to leave her brilliant Court at Strasbourg and proceed to Munich.

When Joséphine reached Munich the first week in December, she found the young princesse far from ready to carry out the agreements which her father had made for her at Linz a month before. In spite of all the charms of Joséphine, she continued to refuse to break her engagement to Charles. Affairs were in this state when Duroc arrived from Vienna on the 21 December, to present the official demand. In his letter to the Elector, the Emperor insisted that the arrangements made at Linz should be carried out, and expressed his wish " to see the marriage celebrated at the same moment as the conclusion of the general peace, which will certainly be signed within a fortnight."

On Christmas day, the eve of the conclusion of the treaty at Presburg, the Elector, to avoid a " painful explanation," writes his daughter:

" If there were a glimmer of hope, my dear Augusta, that you could ever wed Charles, I should not beg you on my knees to give him up; still less should I insist that you give your hand to the future King of Italy if this crown were not to be guaranteed by the Powers at the conclusion of the peace, and if I were not convinced

of all the good qualities of Prince Eugène, who has everything to render you happy. . . . Reflect, dear Augusta, that a refusal will make the Emperor as much our enemy as he has been until now the friend of our House."

" My very dear and tender Father," Augusta replied, " I am forced to break the pledge which I have given to Prince Charles of Baden: I consent, as much as that costs me, if the repose of a dear father and the happiness of a people depend upon it; but I am not willing to give my hand to Prince Eugène if peace is not concluded and if he is not recognized as King of Italy."

The Emperor had not yet informed the Viceroy of his plans, but Eugène had no doubt been notified by his mother, and had raised no objections. The day after his arrival at Munich Napoleon had a long talk with Augusta, and flattered himself that she was reconciled to the marriage. He therefore wrote Eugène that the matter was all arranged. Affairs of State urgently demanded the presence of the Emperor at Paris, and he wanted to set out as soon as the contract was signed, leaving Joséphine to represent him at the wedding. But three days passed, and nothing was done about the contract. On the night of the third the Emperor called Duroc and told him that the contract must be signed at noon the next day, and that it must provide for the marriage on the fifteenth. Accordingly the papers were signed. At the same time the Emperor wrote Eugène to make haste to arrive as soon as possible so as to be certain to find him at Munich. Napoleon had learned that the Queen of Bavaria was trying to delay matters, with the idea of breaking off the marriage as soon as

he left for Paris. Augusta was doing her part by pretending a sudden indisposition, but was quickly cured when the Emperor sent his personal physician to see her.

Napoleon made up his mind that it was necessary for him to remain at Munich until after the ceremony. In the meantime he left nothing undone to remove the petty obstacles to the marriage. He ordered from Paris, as a wedding present, magnificent jewels, costing over two hundred thousand francs; and directed each of his brothers and sisters to send gifts to the value of at least fifteen or twenty thousand francs.

The opposition of the Queen was the most difficult thing to overcome, for she had two special grievances: the execution of the Duc d'Enghien and the breaking of the engagement with Prince Charles. Napoleon was assiduous in his attentions to the Queen, and was so devoted that he even aroused the jealousy of Joséphine. The Queen was not over thirty; she had beautiful eyes, a countenance full of life, and a fine figure. What woman could resist the attentions of a man as fascinating as Napoleon, when he wished to please!

Meanwhile Eugène had made haste. Leaving Padua on the sixth, the day he received the Emperor's letter, he crossed the mountains on the eighth, and reached Munich two days later. At this time Eugène was twenty-four years of age. Without being in any way remarkable, his face was pleasing; he was well built, with a good figure, of medium height. He excelled in all physical exercises, and like his father was a beautiful dancer. Kind, frank, simple in his manners, without hauteur, he was affable with everybody. He had a sunny dispo-

sition and was always gay. Napoleon was very fond of him and treated him like a son. As soon as he saw Eugène, the Emperor ordered him to shave off his moustache, which might displease the princesse.

At the time of her marriage, Augusta was only seventeen. She was tall, well formed, with a sylph-like figure, and a countenance in which kindness was mingled with dignity. She had received an excellent education, and had a good head for affairs, as plainly appears in her letter to her father.

Eugène showed all of his mother's *savoir faire* in his attentions to his future wife, and courted her as warmly as if their marriage were not already arranged. The fears of the young princesse soon turned to joy, and what was to have been a *mariage de convenance* became a real love-match.

The contract was signed on the 13 January in the grand gallery of the Royal Palace. The exact terms never have become public, as the contract was not read as usual, and the copy which Napoleon sent Joseph for deposit in the archives of the Empire was afterwards withdrawn by order of the Emperor. It is known, however, that Napoleon refused absolutely to appoint Eugène King of Italy, or even to name him as heir to the throne except in case of failure of his own " children, natural and legitimate." Eugène henceforth was termed by the Emperor *mon fils,* instead of *mon cousin;* he had the qualification of Imperial and Royal Highness; he passed the first after the Emperor, before Joseph and Louis. In the Imperial Almanac he was called the " adopted son of the Emperor."

After the contract was signed, Maret, the Secre-

tary of State, performed the civil marriage, which he really was not legally qualified to do. The following day, the 14 January 1806, the religious ceremony was celebrated in the Royal Chapel.

Thus Napoleon has forced his entrance into the family of European sovereigns, by an alliance with the ancient House of Wittelsbach, which claims Charlemagne for its founder, and so, through his adopted son, becomes related to most of the reigning families.

This first attempt of Napoleon as a match-maker was a great success. Eugène and Augusta lived very happily together, and after the fall of the Empire she resisted all the entreaties of her family to abandon her husband. Their six children all made distinguished marriages. Eugène, the eldest son, married the Queen of Portugal, and his brother Max espoused a daughter of the Czar of Russia. Of the four daughters, Joséphine married the Crown Prince of Sweden; Eugénie, a Hohenzollern prince; Amélie, the first Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro; and the youngest daughter, the Count of Würtemberg.

A week after the wedding Prince Eugène and his wife left Munich for Milan. Napoleon and Joséphine were already on their way to Paris, where they arrived on the night of the 26 January.

At Paris the news of the victory of Austerlitz had been received with transports of joy. Even Madame de Rémusat, so severe, so implacable for Napoleon, in her *Mémoires* composed after the Restoration, wrote her husband on the 18 December 1805: "You cannot imagine how every head is turned. Every one sings the

praises of the Emperor. . . . I was so wrought up that I think, if the Emperor had appeared at that moment, I should have thrown myself upon his neck, ready afterwards to beg pardon at his feet."

The prolongation of the Emperor's stay at Munich had only served to increase the impatience of the Parisians, and had well prepared the stage for his return. The Bank of France, to celebrate the occasion, resumed specie payments. On the 4 February there was a gala performance at the Opéra. When Napoleon entered with Joséphine during the second act, the performance was interrupted while the whole audience arose and cheered.

Soon after his return to Paris the Emperor carried out the second part of his scheme for alliances with the royal families of Europe. On the 8 April 1806, in the chapel of the Tuileries, was celebrated with great pomp the marriage of Charles of Baden and Stéphanie de Beauharnais.

Prince Charles, then twenty-three years of age, without being exactly ugly, had a very plain face; his pink and white complexion and his chubby figure gave him the appearance of a Dutch doll; and his extreme timidity contributed an air of awkwardness. But these apparent defects were only superficial; on better acquaintance one could appreciate the rare and excellent qualities of his heart, the refinement of his feelings. He had that true spirit of kindness which inspires more affection than qualities more brilliant.

Stéphanie, who was born in Paris on the 28 August 1789, was a distant cousin of Joséphine's first husband, Alexandre de Beauharnais. Abandoned by her father,

Comte Claude de Beauharnais, when he emigrated at the beginning of the Revolution, the child had owed her existence to the charity of friends. At the end of 1804 she was brought to Paris and placed in the school of Madame Campan by the express orders of the Emperor, who was indignant at Joséphine's treatment of her niece *à la mode de Bretagne*. On his return to Paris after the Austerlitz campaign, Napoleon installed the young girl in the Tuileries, and soon became very much interested in her. With her golden hair, her blue eyes, her slight form, her free ways, this girl of sixteen greatly attracted the Emperor, and especially so because she showed not the slightest timidity in his presence. The first week in March she was formally adopted by the Emperor, who gave her a dot of a million and a half on the day of her marriage, besides a magnificent collection of jewels, and a trousseau, selected by Joséphine, which was in excellent taste and of rare elegance.

This marriage, made under such auspicious circumstances, seemed to promise a happy future, but these hopes were disappointed, at least at first. Charles, on account of his timidity, failed to win the love of his wife, who was too young and too frivolous to appreciate his really fine qualities. But, as the old French proverb says, *tout vient à point à qui sait attendre* (everything comes to him who waits). The eyes of Stéphanie were finally opened, and she came to love her husband very dearly. So this union ended, as so many others begin, in perfect happiness. Their greatest trial was the loss of their two sons, who died soon after birth. Both of them still young, Charles and his wife had every reason to hope for another son, but it was not to be. In Decem-

ber 1818 Charles died suddenly at the age of thirty-five. This made a great change in the position of Stéphanie. The previous year, Charles had issued a pragmatic sanction insuring the succession to the crown to the counts of Hochberg, the issue of a morganatic marriage between his grandfather, the Grand Duke Charles Frederick, and the Countess Hochberg.

Stéphanie won the warm affections of the grand-ducal family and of her subjects. Her death in 1860, during the Second Empire, was deeply regretted in Baden, as well as at Paris, where she was a frequent visitor. Her eldest daughter, Louise, married Prince Gustave de Wasa, and became the mother of the Queen of Saxony; the second, Joséphine, married Prince Charles of Hohenzollern, and was the mother of the first King of Roumania, as well as of that prince who in 1870 was the indirect cause of the Franco-German war. Prince Louis-Napoleon wanted to marry the youngest daughter, but Stéphanie thought that her visionary cousin was not a good match for her child, so Marie became Duchess of Hamilton instead of Empress of the French!

CHAPTER TWENTY

1806

QUEEN HORTENSE

Louis Proclaimed King of Holland — Hortense's Unhappy Married Life — Birth of Napoleon-Charles — Louis Buys Saint-Leu — Birth of Napoleon-Louis — Louis and Hortense at The Hague — Joséphine at Mayence — The Campaign of Jena — Napoleon's Letters — The Emperor at Berlin — The Hatzfeld Episode — Prussia Overwhelmed — The Emperor in Poland — He Refuses to Allow Joséphine to Join Him — Battle of Pultusk

ON THURSDAY the 5 June 1806 at the Tuileries Louis Bonaparte was proclaimed King of Holland. He seems to have accepted his new dignity with much reluctance, not that he felt unequal to the position — for he believed himself superior to any task — but because he feared the dominating force of his brother. That the Emperor, in sending Louis to Holland, intended to make that country in fact a part of the Grand Empire, clearly appears in his formal address. In effect he said to Louis: " You are first of all a Frenchman; you are Constable of the Empire; you are the guardian of my strong-places; the interest of France commands, you must obey." Louis, in substance, replied: " I am a Hollander; the people who acclaim me look to me for their happiness."

If Louis was not fully satisfied, for her part Hortense was in despair. She felt that it was almost an act of

LOUIS, KING OF HOLLAND

suicide for her to leave Paris to go to this distant country, so cold and damp, to be shut up with a husband she detested.

After their marriage in January 1802 Louis and Hortense had resided in the little hôtel loaned them by Napoleon in the Rue de la Victoire. Almost from the first day they quarrelled over Joséphine, whom Louis disliked, and whom he wished as far as possible to keep separated from her daughter. He soon left Paris and was absent for many months. Practically abandoned by her husband the second month of her marriage, Hortense spent most of the spring and summer with Napoleon and Joséphine at the Tuileries and Malmaison. During the three weeks that her mother went to Plombières, Hortense did the honors of the Château. The situation was rather equivocal, and naturally gave rise to scandal. It was at this time that rumors were first circulated regarding the relations of Napoleon and Hortense. That there was no foundation for these reports may be stated most positively. Even Bourrienne, who cannot be accused of any great good-will towards Napoleon, declares: " I am happy to be able to give the most formal and positive denial to the infamous supposition that Bonaparte ever had for Hortense any other feelings than those of a step-father for a step-daughter. Authors without belief have attested without proofs not only the criminal liaison which they have imagined, but they have even gone so far as to say that Bonaparte was the father of the eldest son of Hortense. It is a lie, an infamous lie! "

These reports, first put in circulation by the Royalists, were repeated by members of the Emperor's own

family, and soon reached his ears. Under the circumstances Napoleon thought it advisable for Hortense to have a permanent home of her own. The last of July, accordingly, he purchased in the name of Louis and Hortense, and presented to them, a fine mansion near their temporary residence. Here on the 10 October 1802 was born their first child, Napoleon-Charles. In response to a formal order from his brother, Louis returned to Paris just in time to be present on the interesting occasion.

The birth of this child brought about a temporary reconciliation between Hortense and her husband, but Louis soon became uneasy again and left Paris for another absence which lasted until September 1803. Then for a short time they lived together at Compiègne where his brigade was stationed.

In the spring of 1804 Louis bought a large hôtel in Rue Cerutti, now Rue Laffitte, a most pretentious, but very gloomy house, without a ray of sunlight. At the same time he acquired at Saint-Leu, about twelve miles from Paris, a very beautiful country estate. For these two properties he paid approximately a million francs. Hortense spent the summer at Saint-Leu, which is very near Malmaison. On the 10 October 1804 she returned to her Paris house, where on the following day was born her second son, Napoleon-Louis. This was the child who was baptized with so much pomp by the Pope himself at Saint-Cloud just a week before his return to Rome.

During the campaign of Austerlitz, Louis was governor of Paris, and displayed so much zeal and activity in his new post that he won the enthusiastic approval

of the Emperor, who always showed for him a strong partiality. After his great victory of the 2 December 1805, Napoleon began to carry out his projects for family alliances, and for the formation of a ring of buffer states surrounding the French Empire. Pursuant to this policy he arranged the two marriages spoken of above, and now he appointed Louis King of Holland.

Under the orders of the Emperor, Louis should have set out for Holland at once, but upon one pretext or another he deferred his departure for a week. On the 18 June the new King and Queen of Holland arrived at The Hague, where they passed the night in the old royal villa known as the House in the Wood (*Huis ten Bosch*), about a mile and a half from the city. Five days later they made their solemn entry into the capital, escorted only by native troops.

On the first day of July, Louis wrote the Emperor that as soon as his affairs were in good order he should leave The Hague for a month or six weeks to visit the baths. Exactly a month after his arrival, therefore, he set out for Wiesbaden accompanied by Hortense. Not satisfied with this course of baths, a month later he proceeded to Aix-la-Chapelle. While Prussia was arming, and Russia preparing for war, the new King of Holland continued conscientiously to take his *cure*.

At first Hortense seemed quite contented at The Hague. Her vanity was flattered and her imagination carried away by the glamour of royalty. In departing for Wiesbaden she took with her the little crown-prince, who was her favorite child, but left the younger boy in Holland. She was on better terms with her husband than at any period since their marriage. She was also

looking forward to going to Paris for the fête of the Emperor, when she expected to meet Eugène — " only to think of it was happiness."

At daybreak on Thursday the 25 September 1806, accompanied by Joséphine, the Emperor left Saint-Cloud to put himself at the head of his army. They dined at Châlons, and continued their route during the night. At two o'clock the next afternoon they reached Metz, where the Emperor passed six hours in inspecting the fortifications. At ten o'clock they resumed their journey, and arrived at Mayence on the morning of the 28 September.

It is not easy to explain why Joséphine wanted to accompany Napoleon to Mayence and take up her residence there during the campaign. The Emperor certainly wished her to remain at the capital and fulfill her obligations there. Her thought seems to have been to keep as near as possible to Napoleon, in the hope that he would send for her, as at Strasbourg, as soon as his affairs would permit.

Napoleon remained only four days at Mayence, leaving on the evening of the first of October. When the hour for departure came he embraced Joséphine, who was in tears, and did not seem able to tear himself away from her. With one arm around his wife, he drew Talleyrand to him with the other, and cried: " It is very hard to leave the two persons that you love the most! " Then, after once more embracing Joséphine very tenderly, he departed.

Hortense and Stéphanie both came to Mayence to keep Joséphine company. The two cousins were not

sorry to be separated for a time from their uncongenial husbands. As at Strasbourg the previous year, Joséphine held a miniature court, and received the homage of the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine.

The sadness of Napoleon was not of long duration: once more in his element, at the head of his troops, he regained his habitual composure. As usual his correspondence kept Joséphine fully informed of his movements:

To the Empress, at Mayence

BAMBERG, 7 October 1806

I leave to-night for Cronach. My whole army is on the march. All goes well; my health is perfect. I have not yet received any letter from you, but have heard from Eugène and Hortense. Stéphanie must be with you. Her husband, who wishes to take part in the campaign, is with me. Adieu, a thousand kisses and good health.

NAPOLEON

GERA, 2 A.M., 13 October 1806

My affairs are going well, and everything as I would wish. With God's help, in a few days, I think that matters will take a very bad turn for the poor King of Prussia, whom I pity personally, because he is good. The Queen is at Erfurt with him. If she desires to see a battle she will have that cruel pleasure. I am in splendid health; I have put on flesh since my departure; nevertheless I personally cover twenty to twenty-five leagues a day, on horseback, in carriage, in every way. I retire at eight and get up up midnight. I often think that you are not yet in bed. Ever thine.

NAPOLEON

JENA, 3 A.M., 15 October 1806

I have conducted some fine manœuvres against the Prussians. I gained a great victory yesterday. They had 150,000 men; I have taken 20,000 prisoners, 100 cannon, and some flags. I was near to the King of Prussia, and just failed to capture him and the Queen. I have been at my bivouac for two hours. I am very well. Adieu, mon amie; take care of yourself, and love me. If Hortense is at Mayence, kiss her for me, also Napoleon and the little one.

NAPOLEON

WEIMAR, 5 P.M., 16 October 1806

Monsieur Talleyrand will have shown you the bulletin: in it you will have perceived my success. Everything has turned out as I planned: never was an army defeated worse, nor more completely destroyed. It only remains for me to say that I am well and that the fatigue, the bivouac, the night-watches have fattened me. Adieu, ma bonne amie. A thousand best wishes to Hortense and to the big M. Napoleon.

Tout à toi

NAPOLEON

POTSDAM, 24 October 1806

I am here since yesterday, and remain here to-day. I continue to be satisfied with my affairs. My health is good; the weather very fine. I find Sans-Souci very agreeable. Adieu, mon amie.

NAPOLEON

At Sans-Souci the Emperor found the chamber of the great Frederick in the same condition that he left it at the time of his death, and still cared for by one of his old servants. On Sunday he visited the Garrison Church, where in a vault under the severely plain Lutheran

pulpit is the marble sarcophagus which contains the ashes of the King. He ordered sent to the Hôtel des Invalides at Paris the sword and hat and sash of the great warrior which lay upon his tomb. Departing now for the first time from his usual practice, on Monday the 27 October Napoleon entered Berlin in triumph and took up his residence in the Royal Palace.

Meanwhile, at Mayence, Joséphine was sad and uneasy because the Emperor still failed to send for her. Napoleon writes:

To the Empress, at Mayence

BERLIN, 1 November 1806

Talleyrand has arrived, mon amie, and tells me that you do nothing but cry. What then do you wish? You have your daughter, your grandchildren, and good news; these certainly should be reasons enough to feel contented and happy. The weather here is superb; during the whole campaign not a single drop of rain has fallen. I am in excellent health and all goes well. . . .

NAPOLEON

Napoleon, who rightly held Queen Louisa largely responsible for the war, and for the disasters which had overwhelmed her people, in his bulletins had referred to the unfortunate woman in terms which were hardly chivalrous. Joséphine was struck by his lack of delicacy, and ventured to reproach him for his references to the Queen. This called forth the following reply:

To the Empress, at Mayence

BERLIN, 6 November 1806

I have received your letter in which you seem to be displeased because I have spoken disparagingly of women. It is true that I detest meddlesome women above everything. I am accustomed to women who are kind, sweet and winning: those are the ones I like. If they have spoiled me, it is not my fault but your own. Besides, you will see that I have been very good for one who proved herself sweet and reasonable. When I showed Madame Hatzfeld her husband's letter, she said to me with sobs, and great simplicity, " It is indeed his handwriting! " When she was reading it her accent went to my heart: she troubled me. I said to her: " Very well, Madame, throw the letter into the fire; I shall no longer have it in my power to punish your husband." She burned the letter and seemed very happy. Since then her husband is entirely tranquil: two hours later he would have been lost. You see then that I like women who are good, sweet, and naïve, for they are the only ones who resemble you. Adieu, mon amie. I am well.

NAPOLEON

To explain this episode, it should be stated that Prince de Hatzfeld, the Prussian governor of Berlin, had been allowed to retain his position upon his promise, under oath, that he would attend solely to the safety and welfare of the capital. A letter from him had been seized, in which he gave information of the positions of the French army around Berlin. This, by the laws of war, was military treason, and the penalty was death, if found guilty by a military commission.

This short campaign is without parallel even in Napoleon's marvellous career. The pursuit of the defeated

army by Murat was the most remarkable on record. With his cavalry, in three weeks he literally galloped from the Saale to the Baltic, sweeping up the remnants of the Prussian army and capturing the fortresses as he passed.

To the Empress, at Mayence

BERLIN, 9 November 1806

Ma bonne amie, I have good news to tell thee. Magdebourg has surrendered, and the 7 November I captured at Lubeck 20,000 men who escaped a week ago. Thus the whole army is taken: Prussia has left only 20,000 men, beyond the Vistula. Several of my army corps are in Poland. I still remain at Berlin. I am quite well.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

BERLIN, 16 November 1806

I have thy letter of the 11 November. I see with satisfaction that my sentiments give thee pleasure. Thou art wrong to think that they are flattering: I have spoken of thee as I see thee. I am sorry to learn that thou art bored at Mayence. If the journey were not so long it would be possible for thee to come here, for there is no longer any enemy: he is beyond the Vistula, 120 leagues from here. I will wait to hear what you think of it. I should also be very glad to see M. Napoleon. Adieu, ma bonne amie. Tout à toi. My affairs will not yet permit me to return to Paris.

NAPOLEON

In his final letter from Berlin, on the 22 November, Napoleon wrote Joséphine that he would make up his mind in a few days either to send for her or to have

her return to Paris. Four days later, from Kustrin, he told her to be ready to start, and that he would let her know in two days if she could come.

To the Empress, at Mayence

MESERITZ, 27 November 1806

I am going to make a tour in Poland: this is the first city. This evening I shall be at Posen, after which I will call you to Berlin, in order that you may arrive the same day as myself. My health is good; the weather rather bad: it has rained for three days. My affairs go well: the Russians are in flight.

NAPOLEON

POSEN, 29 November 1806

I am at Posen, the capital of Great Poland. Cold weather has set in. My health is good. I am going to make a little trip in Poland. My troops are at the gates of Warsaw. . . .

NAPOLEON

POSEN, 2 December 1806

To-day is the anniversary of Austerlitz. I attended a ball in the city. It is raining. I am well. I love and long for thee. My troops are at Warsaw. It is not yet cold. All these Polish women are like French women, but there is only one woman for me. Dost thou know her? I could easily paint her portrait, but I should make it so flattering that you would hardly recognize it; nevertheless, to tell the truth, my heart would only have kind things to say. The nights are long, all alone.

Tout à toi

NAPOLEON

The following day, from the same place, Napoleon wrote two long letters, one at noon, and the other at six o'clock:

To the Empress, at Mayence

POSEN, 3 December 1806

I am in receipt of your letter of the 26 November, in which I note two things: You say that I do not read your letters — you are entirely wrong. I am vexed with you for having such a wrong idea. You tell me that it may have come from some dream, and you add that you are not jealous. I have observed for a long time that persons who lose their temper always claim that they are not mad, that those who are afraid often say that they have no fear — you are therefore convicted of jealousy: I am delighted! Nevertheless you are wrong. Nothing could be further from my thoughts: in the wastes of Poland one thinks little of the fair sex. Yesterday I gave a ball for the provincial nobility: the women are quite pretty, quite luxurious, quite well-dressed, even in Parisian style.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

POSEN, 3 December 1806

I have your letter of the 27 November, from which I see that your little head is turned. I thought of the verse: *Désir de femme est un feu qui dévore.* You must calm yourself. I have written you that I was in Poland, that as soon as winter quarters are settled, you can come: you must therefore wait several days. The greater one is, the less volition he has: he is the slave of events and circumstances. You can go to Frankfort and Darmstadt. In a few days I expect to send for you, but it is necessary for events to be favorable. The warmth of your letter shows me that you pretty women

have no limitations: what you wish, must be; but I am forced to admit that I am the greatest of slaves: my master has no bowels of pity, and this master is the course of events. Adieu, mon amie; keep well.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

The Emperor remained at Posen two weeks longer, and during that period he wrote Joséphine again four times. Her jealousy was far from being calmed by his letters, but to show her affection, and her thought of him " alone " during the " long nights," she sent him a rug as a present.

To the Empress, at Mayence

POSEN, 9 December 1806

I have your letter of the first, and am glad to see that you are happier; also that the Queen of Holland wants to come with you. I am late in giving the order, but you must still wait several days. Everything goes well. Adieu, mon amie. I love thee and wish to see thee happy.

NAPOLEON

POSEN, 10 December 1806

An officer has brought me a rug from thee. It is a little short and narrow, but I thank thee none the less. I am quite well. The weather is very changeable. My affairs are going quite well. I love thee, and much desire thee. Adieu, mon amie. I shall be as happy to send for thee, as thou to come. Tout à toi. A kiss for Hortense, Stéphanie, and Napoleon.

NAPOLEON

POSEN, 12 December 1806

I have received no letters from you, but I know that you are well. My health is good; the weather very mild. The winter season has not yet begun, but the roads are bad in a country where there are no paved highways. Hortense will then come with Napoleon: I am delighted! I am only waiting for matters to be in shape for me to have you come. I have made peace with Saxony. The Elector becomes King, and joins the Confederation. Adieu, my beloved Joséphine.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

POSEN, 15 December 1806

I am leaving for Warsaw, but shall be back in a fortnight: I hope then to be able to send for you. However, if my stay is prolonged I should be glad to have you return to Paris, where your presence is much desired. You know well that I am governed by circumstances. My health is very good — never better.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

The Emperor left Posen before daybreak on the 16 December and arrived at Warsaw at one o'clock on the morning of the third day, having made two stops en route. Learning that the Russian army was at Pultusk, about thirty miles to the north, he at once headed his corps in that direction, and started for the front. The battle fought on the 26 December proved indecisive. The French, under the command of Lannes, were inferior in numbers, and could make little progress against the stubborn resistance of the Russians. The weather was frightful, and the roads almost impassable. The short day was made even shorter by the premature

darkness due to the stormy cloudy weather. The Emperor, with his Guard, lost the way, and arrived on the field of battle long after the affair was over. In three letters to Joséphine, Napoleon tells of his arrival at Warsaw and the events which followed:

To the Empress, at Mayence

WARSAW, 20 December 1806

I have no news of you. I am well. I have been here two days. My affairs go well. The weather is very mild, and even a little moist. As yet we have had no frost: the season is like October. Adieu, ma bonne amie. I am very anxious to see thee; in five or six days I hope to send for thee.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

GOLYMINE, 29 December 1806

I send you only a line. I am in a miserable barn. I have defeated the Russians; I have taken 30 cannon, their baggage, and 6000 prisoners. The weather is horrible: it rains, and we are in mud up to our knees. In two days I shall be back at Warsaw, and will write thee.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

PULTUSK, 31 December 1806

I had a good laugh over your last letters. You have formed an idea of the fair ones of Poland which they little deserve. . . . I received your last letter in a wretched barn, where there was nothing but mud and wind, with straw for a bed. To-morrow I shall be at Warsaw. I think that all is over for this year: the army is going into winter quarters.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1807

MADAME WALEWSKA

Napoleon's First Meeting with Marie Walewska — Beginning of Their Long Liaison — The Emperor Orders Joséphine to Return to Paris — The Terrible Battle of Eylau — Napoleon Tries to Minimize His Losses — Headquarters at Osterode — Napoleon's Letter to Joseph — His Brief Letters to Joséphine — The Empress Returns to Paris — Her Cordial Welcome — Her Loneliness — Birth of Her First Granddaughter — Napoleon Moves to Finckenstein — He Is Joined by Madame Walewska — The Emperor Dictates Regarding Joséphine's Friends

ON the first day of the new year, when the Emperor was returning from Pultusk to Warsaw, he stopped to change horses at the gate of the little city of Bronie. At that time Napoleon was the idol of the Poles, who hoped through him to secure their independence, and an enthusiastic crowd had gathered to welcome the "liberator." Duroc descended from the carriage, and with difficulty pushed his way through the throng. Some one touched his arm, and he turned to look into the large innocent blue eyes of a young girl who seemed almost a child. Her beautiful face, fresh as a rose, was flushed with excitement; her figure was small, but perfectly proportioned. She was very simply dressed, and wore a black hat, with a heavy veil which almost concealed her blond hair. As Duroc at a

glance took in these details, a sweet voice said to him in perfect French: " Monsieur, can you not arrange for me to speak a moment to the Emperor? " Duroc conducted her to the door of the carriage, and said to the Emperor: " Sire, here is a lady who has braved all of the dangers of the crowd for you." Napoleon bowed and started to address her, but she did not allow him to finish. Carried away by her enthusiasm she wished him a thousand welcomes to her native land, and expressed her gratitude for what he had done to free it from the yoke of Russia.

Napoleon was so struck with her beauty that he ordered Duroc to find out the name of the " belle inconnue." After many inquiries the marshal learned that her name was Marie Walewska. Of an old but ruined Polish family, two years before, at the age of sixteen, she had married the chief of one of the most illustrious houses of Poland, a man seventy years of age, with a grandchild nine years older than herself.

Comte Walewski, who was as intensely patriotic as his young wife, was then staying at his town-house in Warsaw. The Emperor requested Prince Poniatowski, in whose palace he was residing, to give a ball, and invite the comte and his wife to be present. The prince called in person to extend this invitation. Marie was frightened at this special mark of attention, and at first refused to accept, but finally yielded to the entreaties of her husband.

At the ball the Emperor paid her many compliments, and the following day wrote her in terms of warm but respectful admiration. He also sent her very handsome presents; but she refused to answer his letters or accept

his gifts. Her coldness only increased the ardor of the Emperor, who never yet had met such opposition to his desires. Yielding finally to the importunities of all around her — the chief magistrates of Poland, her family, even her husband — Marie accepted a rendez-vous. She was made to believe that the fate of her country was in her hands, that Heaven had chosen her to be the instrument of reëstablishing the ancient glory of Poland.

Up to this time Napoleon's *affaires d'amour* had been of short duration, but this attachment was to end only with his departure for Saint Helena. With the exception of Joséphine, Marie Walewska was the only great love of his life.

During the winter Napoleon continued to write Joséphine as frequently as before, but a change will be noted in the tone of his letters, which must have been perceived at once by a woman as jealous and suspicious as Joséphine:

To the Empress, at Mayence

WARSAW, 3 January 1807

I have received your letter, mon amie. Your grief has moved me, but we must submit to circumstances. There are too many lands to traverse between Mayence and Warsaw. Before writing you to come, you must wait until I am able to return to Berlin. Although the defeated enemy is withdrawing, there are many matters for me to settle here. I am strongly of the opinion that you ought to return to Paris, where you are needed. . . . I am well, but the weather is bad. I dearly love thee.

NAPOLEON

WARSAW, 7 January 1807

Mon amie, I am touched by all that you say to me; but the season is cold, the roads are very bad, and hardly safe; I cannot consent therefore to expose you to so much fatigue and danger. Return to Paris for the winter. Go to the Tuileries; give receptions, and lead the same life that you usually do when I am there. This is my wish. Perhaps I shall soon rejoin you there; but you must certainly give up the idea of travelling three hundred leagues at this season, across a hostile country, upon the rear of the army. Believe that it costs me more than you to delay by several weeks the happiness of seeing you, but such is the demand of circumstances and the advantage of affairs. Adieu, ma bonne amie; be happy, and display character.

NAPOLEON

In eight letters which Napoleon wrote during the following three weeks there is only a repetition of the same words: The weather is too bad, the distances too great, and the roads too dangerous for me to consent to your making the journey; Paris demands your return, to give a little life to the capital; I forbid you to cry, or be sad and uneasy; I wish you to be amiable, gay and happy; you are very unjust to doubt my love and devotion!

The winter was unusually mild for Poland, but the Emperor, whose troops were in winter quarters, did not expect the campaign to reopen before spring. In this he was doomed to disappointment: at the end of January the Russians began a forward movement, and Napoleon was forced to leave Warsaw to put himself at the head of his army.

To the Empress, at Paris

WITTEMBERG, noon, 1 February 1807

Your letter of the 11 January from Mayence made me laugh. I am to-day forty leagues from Warsaw. The weather is cold, but fine. Adieu, mon amie; be happy; show character.

NAPOLEON

EYLAU, 3 A.M., 9 February 1807

We had a great battle yesterday; the victory remained with me, but my losses are very heavy. The losses of the enemy, which are still greater, do not console me. Nevertheless I am writing these few lines myself, although I am very tired, to tell you that I am well, and that I love thee.

NAPOLEON

In another letter, written at six o'clock on the night of the same day, and in four other letters sent during the week following, Napoleon gives further details of the battle. Both in his correspondence and in his bulletins he tries to minimize his losses, which had been enormous. He states that he took 40 cannon, 10 flags, 12,000 prisoners, and only lost 1600 killed, 3–4000 wounded. He says nothing of the vicissitudes of this terrible day, of this victory which was so nearly a defeat; of the terrible suffering of his army from cold and hunger; of regiments, and even entire army corps, wiped out; of the great personal danger which he had run in the cemetery when he was almost captured by the Russian grenadiers, and only saved by the valor of his Guard. He does not speak of the words wrung from his pale lips as the night fell on this field covered with dead and dying:

"This sight is enough to inspire in princes the love of peace and the horror of war!" Well would it have been for Napoleon if he had taken these words to heart!

After the battle the Emperor was too weak to follow up the retiring Russians, and was glad to put his troops again in winter quarters. He selected Osterode for his headquarters and here for weeks he shared all the privations of his men. During all this time his only residence was a miserable barn, and it was not until he moved to the castle of Finckenstein the first of April that his quarters became more comfortable.

Napoleon's letters to Joséphine from Osterode were cold, brief, commonplace, almost insignificant. He spoke of his health, the weather, and ended always with the injunction to be gay! A letter to his brother Joseph, under date of the first of March, gives a better idea of the horrors of this terrible winter campaign:

To Joseph, at Paris

The officers of the general staff have not had their clothes off in two months, some in four; I myself have gone a fortnight without removing my boots. We are surrounded with snow and mud; without wine or eau-de-vie; with no bread, eating only meat and potatoes; making long marches and counter-marches; fighting usually with the bayonet, and obliged to drag the wounded in sleighs, without cover, over a space of fifty leagues.

NAPOLEON

In the eleven letters he sent to Joséphine from Osterode, Napoleon says, in substance:

Endeavor to pass your time agreeably; do not worry.

I am in a wretched village, where I shall still pass considerable time. I have never been in better health. I have ordered what you want for Malmaison. Be gay and happy: it is my wish.

I am looking for the spring, which ought to come soon. I love thee, and wish to see thee gay and happy. They say many foolish things about the battle of Eylau; the bulletins tell all; the losses are exaggerated rather than under-stated.

I learn that the gossip of your salon in Mayence has been renewed: make them stop talking.

You should not go to a small box in a little theatre. That does not accord with your rank: attend only the four large theatres and always use the large box.

To be agreeable to me you must live in all respects exactly as you do when I am in Paris. Grandeurs have their inconveniences: an empress cannot go to the same places as a private individual.

Your letter grieves me. You must not die; you are in excellent health, and you have no reasonable ground of chagrin. You should go to Saint-Cloud for the month of May, but remain in Paris during April. You must not think of travelling this summer. I know how to do other things than make war, but duty is the first consideration. All my life I have sacrificed everything — tranquillity, self-interest, happiness — to my destiny.

These fine phrases were far from satisfying Joséphine, who knew that her Napoleon, in spite of his pretended Spartan simplicity, sometimes gave himself distractions!

For nearly four months at Mayence Joséphine had

waited in vain for the permission of the Emperor to rejoin him. Finally, on the 3 January he had expressed his wish that she should return to Paris. This desire he reiterates in four other letters, and in more positive form. It was his letter of the eighteenth which decided her: "If you continue to cry, I shall believe you devoid of courage and character. I do not like cowards. An empress should have heart." Nothing remained but to start.

The brilliant winter of 1805, after the Coronation, had been followed by the two dead seasons of 1806 and 1807, and a Paris without a Court, without balls, fêtes or receptions, was very hard on the merchants, who complained bitterly. By order of the Emperor, the princes of the Empire had opened their houses, but this did not make up for the absence of the sovereigns.

Leaving Mayence on the 26 January, the Empress spent the following night at Strasbourg, where a small fête had been improvised in her honor. The hall of the hôtel of the préfecture was brilliantly decorated. After a contredanse and a valse, the Empress made the round of the room, addressing with her usual grace and affability a pleasant word to each one of the ladies present. At an early hour on the following morning Joséphine resumed her route, and arrived at the Tuileries at eight o'clock on the night of the 31 January. Her return to the capital was announced the next day at noon by a salvo of artillery fired by the guns of the Invalides. A little fatigued by her journey, the Empress did not hold a reception until the fifth, when all the high officials of State called to render their homage. By Monge, president of the Senate, by Fontanes, president of the Corps

Législatif, by the president of the Tribunal, the vicar-general of Notre-Dame, and the préfet de la Seine, she was welcomed in speeches almost as flattering as those usually addressed to the Emperor.

In spite of all this adulation, more or less sincere, Joséphine was far from happy. She regretted the absence of her children, and of her husband; she was worried over the dangers which Napoleon was running in this distant campaign, and the reports of his liaison with the " belle Polonaise." A few days after her return she wrote Hortense:

> My journey has been happy, if I may so call it when it has separated me so far from the Emperor. I have received five letters from him since my departure. I want you to write me, especially as you are not now near to console me. Let me know how you are, also your husband and children. Although I indeed receive more people here than at Mayence, my heart is nevertheless very lonely, and, in writing, you will still keep me company. Adieu, my dear daughter. I love and embrace you tenderly.

During the following month the heart of Joséphine was rejoiced by the news of the birth at Milan on the 17 March of a daughter to Augusta and Eugène, who was named Joséphine by order of the Emperor. This was the princesse who twenty years later married the son of Bernadotte, Oscar, crown-prince, and later King of Sweden. Joséphine longed to go to Italy to see her first granddaughter in her cradle, but feared to leave Paris without the permission of the Emperor. She wrote Hortense that Eugène was delighted at the birth of his daughter, but complained that he could hardly see her " as she slept all the time."

The first of April the Emperor changed his residence to Finckenstein where he occupied a fine château built by the governor of Frederick the Great. At this time it was the property of Comte de Dohna, grand master of the household of the King of Prussia. It is still owned by the same family, and at a recent date the room occupied by Napoleon was carefully preserved in the same condition. Here Napoleon was very comfortably installed, with his staff and his military family. An apartment adjoining his own was fitted up for Madame Walewska. She left at Warsaw her aged husband, whom she was never to see again, and spent three weeks with the Emperor. They took all of their meals alone, and were served by Constant, the valet de chambre of Napoleon. When the Emperor was not with her, Marie passed her time in reading, or in watching from the windows the parades in the court of the château, which were often commanded by the Emperor in person. She had a very sweet, even disposition, was always gay and full of life, and Napoleon became more attached to her every day.

During the two months that he lived at Finckenstein, Napoleon as usual wrote Joséphine two or three times a week:

To the Empress, at Paris

FINCKENSTEIN, 2 April 1807

I have just moved my headquarters to a fine château, much like that of Bessières, where there are many fireplaces. This is very pleasant for me, as I often rise during the night, and enjoy seeing the fire. My health is perfect. The weather

is fine, but still cold. The thermometer is at four to five degrees. Adieu, mon amie.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

During the visit of Marie, the letters of Napoleon were even shorter and more commonplace. In them there were only a few lines about the weather, the temperature, the state of his health, and his desire to know that she was "gay and contented." Alas! poor Joséphine, her days of happiness were about over.

After the departure of his inamorata Napoleon's correspondence once more becomes interesting:

To the Empress, at Paris

FINCKENSTEIN, 2 May 1807

Mon amie, I have your letter of the 23 April, and am glad to see that you are well, also that you still love Malmaison. They say that the arch-chancellor (Cambacérès) is in love. Is that a joke, or is it true? It amuses me, but you have not said a word. I am very well, and the weather is fine at last: springtime appears and the leaves begin to push. Adieu, mon amie. A thousand loving thoughts.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

FINCKENSTEIN, 10 May 1807

I have your letter. I do not know what you mean by ladies in *correspondence* with me. I love only my little Joséphine, good, *boudeuse* and capricious, who knows how to quarrel gracefully, as she does everything else, for she is always amiable — except when she is jealous: then she becomes a regular little devil. But let us return to these ladies. If I

must occupy myself with some one among them I assure you that I should wish them to be pretty rose-buds. Are those of whom you speak in this class?

I wish you never to dine except with persons who have dined with me; that your list should be the same for your assemblies; that you never admit at Malmaison, in your inner life, ambassadors and strangers. If you act otherwise, you will displease me. Finally, do not allow yourself to be surrounded by people whom I do not know, and who would not come to your house if I were there. Adieu, mon amie.

Tout à toi

NAPOLEON

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1807

DEATH OF NAPOLEON–CHARLES

Birth of Napoleon's First Child — Death of the Crown-Prince of Holland — Grief of Hortense — Joséphine Goes to Laeken — She Is Joined There by Hortense — Napoleon's Letters to His Wife and Daughter — His Apparent Indifference — Joséphine Writes to Hortense — The Emperor's Letters after Friedland — The Peace Conferences at Tilsit — Napoleon Declines the Queen's Rose — His Return to Paris

ON the fifth of May, a date to be ominous in the annals of Napoleon, the little crown-prince of Holland died at the age of four years and seven months.

Only a few months before, in her hôtel in the Rue de la Victoire, at Paris, a certain Mlle. Éléonore Dénuelle had given birth to a male child who received the name of Léon. He was the fruit of a short liaison between the Emperor and a reader of his sister Caroline. Léon, who bore a striking resemblance to his father, but inherited none of his talents, was destined to live through four Governments of France, and die in poverty at Paris in April 1881 under the Third Republic.

These two events, apparently without any connection, were to change the destiny of Napoleon, and to have a decisive influence upon the fate of Joséphine. The heir-presumptive to the imperial throne was dead, and for the first time the Emperor was convinced that

it was possible for him to have a direct heir of his own blood. Although the dénouement was to be postponed for two years and a half, from that time the divorce was absolutely certain.

Napoleon-Charles, the eldest son of Louis and Hortense, was a child of unusual beauty and intelligence. The Emperor, who loved children, was particularly fond of his little nephew, whom he fully intended to adopt as his heir. He had played with the child, as a baby, and had seen him develop with great interest. The little Napoleon was sweet, loving, full of life and spirits, adored by his mother, and also by his gloomy father. In her unhappy married life this boy was the joy and the consolation of Hortense, her hope and her pride.

During the night of the fourth-fifth of May 1807 the little prince was suddenly attacked by the croup, a disease little understood at that time. In the morning he was better, and the physicians were hopeful of his recovery. But the trouble returned again during the evening, and at ten o'clock the child passed away.

No words can describe the despair of the unfortunate mother. Hortense seemed petrified with grief, and they were afraid that she would lose her reason.

Joséphine also was overwhelmed with sorrow. She did not dare to leave the Empire, to go to The Hague, but proceeded at once to the château of Laeken, near Brussels, whence she wrote Hortense:

To Hortense, at The Hague

LAEKEN, 10 P.M., 14 May 1807

My dear child, I have just arrived at the château of Laeken, where I await you. Come and give me life: your

QUEEN HORTENSE

presence is necessary, and you also must need to see me, and to weep with your mother. I would have liked to go further, but my strength failed me, and besides I have not had time to notify the Emperor. I have found the courage to come thus far, and I hope that you too will be brave enough to come to your mother. Adieu, my dear daughter. I am overcome with fatigue, but above all with grief.

JOSÉPHINE

The following night, Hortense and Louis arrived, with their only remaining child, Napoleon-Louis, who was then two years and a half old. Hortense was like a statue of despair. She did not shed any tears, and her cold calm, her absolute silence, were more alarming than the most violent manifestations of grief. When she spoke, which was rarely, it was only to talk of *him*. When ten o'clock struck, she turned to one of her ladies, and remarked: " It was at this hour that he died."

A special courier had been sent to announce the fatal news to the Emperor. He immediately wrote Joséphine:

To the Empress, at Saint-Cloud

(FINCKENSTEIN), 14 May 1807

I can conceive all the grief that the death of poor Napoleon has caused you; you can understand the pain that I feel. I should like to be near you, in order that you might be moderate and reasonable in your grief. You have been fortunate enough never to lose a child, but it is one of the conditions and penalties attached to our human misery. Let me hear that you have been reasonable and that you are well! Do you wish to increase my pain?

Adieu, mon amie.

NAPOLEON

(Finckenstein), 16 May 1807

I have your letter of the 6 May. I see by it already the pain that you feel; I fear that you are not responsible and that you are too much afflicted by the misfortune which has come to us.

Adieu, mon amie. Tout à toi

Napoleon

To the Empress, at Laeken

(Finckenstein), 20 May 1807

I am in receipt your letter of the 10 May. I see that you have gone to Laeken. I think that you can remain there a fortnight: that will please the Belgians, and will serve as a distraction for you.

I have noticed with regret that you are not sensible. Grief has its limits which should not be passed. Take care of yourself for your friend, and believe me most sincerely yours.

Napoleon

It will be interesting to read here the letter written the same day by the Emperor to his step-daughter:

To the Queen of Holland

Finckenstein, 20 May 1807

My daughter, all the news that I receive from The Hague tells me that you are not reasonable: no matter how legitimate your grief may be, it should have its limits. Do not let it affect your health; look for distractions; know that life is full of such trials, and may be the source of so many misfortunes that death is not the greatest of all.

Your affectionate father

Napoleon

In two other letters to Joséphine at Laeken, the Emperor writes in much the same vein:

To the Empress, at Laeken

(Finckenstein), 24 May 1807

I have your letter from Laeken. I see with regret that you are still full of grief, and that Hortense has not yet arrived. She is not reasonable, and does not deserve to be loved, because she loved only her children.

Endeavor to calm yourself, and do not cause me grief. For every evil without remedy, we must find some consolation.

Adieu, mon amie.

Tout à toi

Napoleon

(Finckenstein), 26 May 1807

I am in receipt your letter of the sixteenth. I see with pleasure that Hortense has arrived at Laeken. I am annoyed at your report of the kind of stupor which she still shows. She should have more courage, and control herself. I cannot conceive why they want her to go to the baths: she would be much more diverted at Paris, and find more consolation. Control yourself; be gay, and take care of yourself. My health is very good.

Adieu, mon amie. I suffer much on account of your grief, and regret that I am not with you.

Napoleon

During a brief visit which he made to Dantzig the first of June, the Emperor wrote Joséphine, and also Hortense at the same time:

To the Empress, at Malmaison

(Dantzig), 2 June 1807

Mon amie, I have just learned of your arrival at Malmaison. I have no letters from you. I am angry with Hortense: she has not written me a word. I am grieved with all that you tell me of her. How does it happen that you have not been able to divert her a little? You cry! I hope that you will get yourself under control, in order that I may not find you entirely sad.

I have been at Dantzig for two days. The weather is very fine, and I am very well. I think more of you than you think of the absent one.

Adieu, mon amie; a thousand loving thoughts. Send this letter to Hortense.

Napoleon

To the Queen of Holland

2 June 1807

My daughter, you have not written me a word, in your just and great grief. You have forgotten everything, as if you were never in the future to endure other losses. They tell me that you no longer care for anything; that you are wholly indifferent; I perceive it from your silence. It is not well, Hortense! It is not what you promised us. Your son was all in all to you. Your mother and I are then of no account! If I had been at Malmaison, I should have shared your grief; but I should also have wished to have you turn to your best friends. Adieu, my child, be gay, be resigned. Take care of yourself in order to fulfill all your duties. My wife is very sad over your condition: do not cause her more grief.

Your affectionate father
Napoleon

Two days after the battle of Friedland Napoleon again wrote Hortense:

DEATH OF NAPOLEON-CHARLES

To the Queen of Holland

(Friedland), 16 June 1807

My daughter, I have received your letter dated at Orléans; your griefs touch me, but I would like to know that you had more courage: to live is to suffer, and the worthy man strives always to remain master of himself. I do not like to see you unjust to the little Napoleon-Louis, and to all of your friends. Your mother and I had hoped that we were of more account than we seem to be in your heart. I gained a great victory the 14 June. I am well, and love you dearly. Adieu, my daughter. I embrace you with all my heart.

Napoleon

It must be admitted that Napoleon does not appear to advantage in these letters. To a mother stupefied with grief, and to a grandmother almost equally overwhelmed, he has nothing more consoling to say than the injunction to be "gay," and to seek "diversions." Yet Napoleon dearly loved the little prince, and had fully expected to make him his heir. The loss of the child must have been a severe blow both to his affections and his family pride. The Emperor had in his composition much of the stoicism of the American Indian, and under this appearance of *nonchalance* he may have concealed his own deep sorrow. He really had a very profound sensibility, and was not so callous as his remarks on many occasions would lead one to think. To quote his own words: "Man often appears more cold and selfish than he really is." At one moment he exclaims: "Friendship is but a name!" At another he says: "We only feel how much we love when we meet

again, or during absence." And again: "Love for one's children and one's wife are those sweet affections which subdue the soul by the heart, and the feelings by tenderness."

In his letters to Fouché and Monge, the Emperor displayed more feeling. To Fouché on the 18 May he wrote: "I have been much afflicted by the misfortune which has befallen me. I had hoped for a more brilliant destiny for this poor child." To Monge: "I thank you for all that you say regarding the death of the poor little Napoleon: it was his destiny!" Again to Fouché: "The loss of the little Napoleon has caused me much grief. I wish that his father and mother had received from nature as much courage as myself to know how to endure the evils of life; but they are younger and have reflected less upon the fragility of earthly ties!" Such is his philosophy. He is too much of a fatalist to feel any revolt against death. He is always ready; for every day, at every moment, he faces it, and the unexpected does not disconcert him. Manifestations of grief are forbidden by his calling, by his duty as a commander: he had faced death on too many bloody fields to be appalled by the everlasting night "when deep sleep falleth on men."

After a short stay at Laeken, Hortense went with Joséphine to Malmaison, and a few days later proceeded to Cauterêts in the Pyrenees to take the baths. Her mother wrote her from Saint-Cloud on the 27 May:

> I have often cried since your departure, my dear Hortense; this separation has been very painful to me. . . . I have received news of your son: he is at the château of Laeken, in good health, and awaiting the arrival of the

King. The Emperor has written me again: he participates deeply in our grief. I needed this consolation, for I have none since your departure. . . . Adieu, my dear daughter; take care of yourself for a mother who tenderly loves you.

On the 4 June Joséphine again wrote from Saint-Cloud:

Your letter has comforted me very much, my dear Hortense. . . . The Emperor has been strongly affected: in all his letters he tries to give me courage, but I know that he has been much moved by this unfortunate occurrence. The King reached Saint-Leu last night; he has let me know that he is coming to see me to-day; he must leave the little one with me during his absence. You know how much I love this child, and the care that I will take of him. It is my wish that the King follow you: it will be a consolation for you both to see each other. All the letters that I have received from him since you left are full of his attachment for you. Your heart is too sensitive not to be touched by it. Adieu, my dear girl, take care of your health. I embrace you tenderly.

This letter displays all the goodness and kindness of Joséphine's nature: she endeavors to soften the reproaches of Napoleon, and to bring Hortense and her husband together. A week later she wrote: " Your son is in splendid health: he greatly amuses me. He is so sweet: I think that he has all the ways of the dear child whom we mourn." Joséphine knew how to console better than the Emperor!

While Hortense was in the depths of despair, and her mother was trying to assuage her grief, the Emperor brought to an end this terrible campaign of Poland by

the brilliant victory of Friedland. He tells the story to Joséphine in his usual concise, graphic style:

To the Empress, at Saint-Cloud

FRIEDLAND, 15 June 1807

Mon amie, I write you only a word, for I am very tired. My children have worthily celebrated the anniversary of Marengo.

The battle of Friedland will also be celebrated, and equally glorious for my people. The whole Russian army put to rout: 80 cannon, 30,000 men killed or prisoners; 25 generals, killed, wounded or taken; the Russian Guard crushed — it is a worthy sister of Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena! The bulletin will tell you the rest. My loss is not considerable; I manœuvred the enemy with success.

Be reassured and content.

Adieu, mon amie. NAPOLEON

FRIEDLAND, 4 P.M., 16 June 1807

Mon amie, I sent you a courier yesterday with the news of the battle of Friedland. Since then I have continued the pursuit of the enemy. Kœnigsberg, a city of 80,000 souls, is in my power. I have found there many cannon, large magazines, and more than 60,000 guns, brought from England.

Adieu, mon amie; my health is perfect, although I have a slight cold from the rain and the coolness of the bivouac. Be content and gay.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

From Tilsit, on the 19 June, the Emperor sent Joséphine the welcome news that the victory had been

decisive, and that the campaign was over. A few days later he wrote that he had met the Czar Alexander, and was very much pleased with him: " He is a very handsome, good and young Emperor, and has more intelligence than most people think. He is coming to-morrow to take up his residence in Tilsit."

At Tilsit, the Czar and the King of Prussia dined every day with the Emperor, as he tells Joséphine in his correspondence. An hour after her arrival Napoleon paid a visit to the Queen of Prussia, who was one of the most beautiful and most attractive women of her day. When she came to dine with him that evening the Emperor received her with great respect at the door of his mansion. But he was firm in his refusal to mitigate at her request any of the hard conditions of the peace which he imposed on Prussia. At dinner, that night, the Queen offered a beautiful rose to Napoleon, saying with a gracious smile: " Take it, Sire, but in exchange for Magdebourg." This episode is alluded to by the Emperor in the following letter:

To the Empress, at Saint-Cloud

(Tilsit), 7 July 1807

Mon amie, the Queen of Prussia dined with me yesterday. I had to refuse to make some concessions to her husband which she endeavored to obtain from me. But I have been gallant, while adhering to my policy. She is very amiable. Later I will give you the details which it would take too long to tell now. When you read this letter peace with Prussia and Russia will be concluded, and Jérôme recognized as King of Westphalia with three millions of population. This news for you only.

Adieu, mon amie; I love thee, and wish to know that thou art gay and contented.

NAPOLEON

After a last interview with the Czar, at the end of which the two sovereigns embraced each other affectionately, the Emperor went for a short visit to Kœnigsberg. Leaving there at six o'clock on the night of the 13 July he travelled directly to Dresden, where he arrived at five o'clock on the seventeenth. He spent ninety-two hours in his carriage, stopping to rest only twice en route, and then only for very brief intervals. From Dresden he wrote Joséphine the last of his letters during this campaign:

To the Empress, at Saint-Cloud

(DRESDEN), Noon, 18 July 1807

Mon amie, I arrived at Dresden at five o'clock last evening, feeling very well, although I remained a hundred hours in my carriage without getting out. I am staying here with the King of Saxony, with whom I am well pleased. I have therefore covered half the distance to thee.

It may happen that one of these fine nights I shall fall upon thee at Saint-Cloud like a jealous husband: I give thee fair warning!

Adieu, mon amie; it will give me great pleasure to see thee.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

At six o'clock on the morning of the 27 July the Emperor was back at Saint-Cloud, after an absence of over ten months.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1807

THE COURT AT FONTAINEBLEAU

Talleyrand Appointed Vice-Grand-Électeur — Fête of the Emperor — Marriage of Jérôme and Catherine — Return of Louis and Hortense — New Quarrels — Louis Departs Alone for Holland — Napoleon's Power — The Court Goes to Fontainebleau — Napoleon at Thirty-eight — The Emperor's Program of Entertainment — Life of Joséphine — Ennui of the Emperor and His Guests — The Gazzani Affair — Jérôme's Flirtation with Stéphanie — Illness of Hortense — She Refuses Any Reconciliation with Louis

THE credit of Talleyrand had never stood so high as at this time. He had been of great use to the Emperor in Poland, and had ably carried out the negotiations for the Treaty of Tilsit. By way of recompense, on the 9 August, the Emperor made him vice-grand-elector. This great dignity of the Empire gave Talleyrand the right to replace Joseph on all occasions of ceremony, but at the same time he was forced to give up the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, as being beneath the dignity of his new rank. The emoluments of his new office, added to his salary as grand chamberlain and the revenues of his principality of Benevento, gave him an income of half a million francs. At the same time his personal fortune was estimated at fully six millions. Every treaty that he had concluded had brought him enormous *gratifications*.

On the 15 August the fête of the Emperor was celebrated with great magnificence. In the morning a *Te Deum* was chanted at Notre-Dame. In the evening there was a banquet at the Tuileries, followed by a concert and a ballet. The salons of the Château were filled with all the dignitaries of the Empire, in full evening dress. The Emperor appeared on the balcony, holding the hand of Joséphine, and was cheered by an immense crowd in the illuminated Gardens below.

A week later was celebrated the marriage of Jérôme with the young Princesse Catherine of Würtemberg. The Pope had firmly refused to grant the Emperor's petition for an annulment of the Patterson marriage, but the French ecclesiastical authorities proved more amenable, and in October 1806 the marriage was declared null and void.

Jérôme, who was the youngest, and also the most worthless of the Bonapartes, had just received from his brother the crown of Westphalia. The princesse, who was nearly two years older than her husband, was a woman of much charm. She was tall and beautiful; affable in her manners, and of superior intelligence.

After a marriage by procuration at Stuttgart, Catherine came to Paris. She arrived at the Tuileries on the 21 August; the contract was signed the next day in the Galerie de Diane; and was followed on the 23 August by the religious ceremony, which was performed in the chapel by the Archbishop of Ratisbon, the Prince-Primate of the Confederation of the Rhine. Thus was carried out the third part of the Emperor's plan for alliances with the royal families of Europe. This marriage also proved quite a happy one. Catherine was

devoted to Jérôme, notwithstanding his many notorious infidelities, and refused to abandon him after the fall of the Empire.

At the end of this month the King and Queen of Holland returned from their visit to the baths in the Pyrenees. Hortense had been joined by Louis at Cauterêts in June, and they had once more resumed their life in common. At the time of their arrival at Saint-Cloud they seemed to be on very good terms with each other, but still sad over their loss. Hortense was very thin, and already suffering from the beginning of her *grossesse*. At the baths she had met the secretary of Madame Mère, Monsieur Decazès, who had just lost his wife, and the fact that they were both in mourning had been a bond of sympathy between them. Reports of their intimacy had reached Paris, and Caroline did not hesitate to retail the scandal to her brother on his return, even going so far as to insinuate that the interesting condition of Hortense was due to the handsome young secretary. It did not take much to revive the suspicions of the jealous Louis, and discord once more reigned in the royal household. Louis naturally wished to take his wife and son with him on his return to Holland, but the Empress, alarmed at her daughter's appearance, called a consultation of physicians, who unanimously decided that it would be dangerous for Hortense in her condition to return for the winter to the cold, damp climate of the Low Countries. The Emperor therefore ordered that Hortense and her son should remain in Paris. Louis submitted with apparent reluctance to his brother's command and departed alone for The Hague.

Hortense, who had previously endured without com-

plaint the unjust suspicions of Louis, was this time mortally offended, and conceived a profound hatred for her husband. When she found that he had believed her capable of an *intrigue galante* at a moment when she was thinking only of death, in the depths of her despair over the loss of her favorite child, she resolved never to live with him again.

For the first time in his life the Emperor now decided to take a real vacation of eight weeks, and the Court was ordered to assemble on the 21 September at Fontainebleau. This historic château was always a favorite place of residence for Napoleon, and now that the Tuileries and Saint-Cloud have disappeared it is the only royal palace with which his name is identified.

In the autumn of 1807, Napoleon was at the zenith of his glory. He never yet had known defeat: at Austerlitz, Jena and Friedland he had conquered the three greatest nations of the Continent. To the democratic days of the earlier period of the Empire had succeeded an aristocratic régime. The Emperor posed as a new Charlemagne, the chief of a family of sovereigns. To him the kings of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Holland, Saxony, Naples and Westphalia owed their royal crowns. The reigning princes of the Confederation of the Rhine were his vassals. From the Baltic to the Pyrenees, from the Channel to the Adriatic, his will was law.

Accordingly the command had gone forth that the Court was to amuse itself at Fontainebleau: *pleasure* was the order of the day. Never before had Europe witnessed such a gathering of kings and princes. The Emperor and Empress arrived on the 21 September, and

CHÂTEAU OF FONTAINEBLEAU

within a few days there appeared: the Queen of Holland, the Queen of Naples, the King and Queen of Westphalia, the Grand-Duke of Berg (Murat) and his wife, Madame Mère, the Princesse Pauline, Prince Charles of Baden and his wife, the Prince-Primate, the Duke of Würzburg, and too many others to mention. The Emperor had also commanded the presence of Talleyrand, Berthier, Champagny, and Maret; all of the grand officers of the imperial household, the ministers of the Kingdom of Italy, and several of the marshals.

This visit of the Court to Fontainebleau is one of the most interesting episodes of life under the Empire and well deserves a chapter to itself. The Emperor never again consecrated so long a period of time solely to pleasure, and his Court was never more brilliant. Here for the first and last time there was a renewal of the life of the Ancien Régime, as it was in the days of the Grand Monarque: here came to the surface the same interests, passions, intrigues, weaknesses, treacheries — in a word, it was a real Court! It would require the pen of a Saint-Simon faithfully to depict the scene, with all its changing lights and shadows, to seize its full spirit, and make it live again. It furnishes the theme of one of the most interesting stories in the memoirs of Madame de Rémusat:

"At this time, Napoleon, oblivious of the past, certain of the future, was proceeding with a firm step, anticipating no obstacle, or at least certain that he could easily overcome any found in his path. It seemed to him, it seemed to every one, that he could not fall except by an event so unlooked for, so strange, and

so catastrophic, that a mass of interests in favor of order and repose were solemnly engaged in his conservation. In fact, master or friend of all the kings of the Continent, ally of many by treaties or foreign marriages, sure of Europe by the new partitions he had made, having upon the most remote frontiers important garrisons which insured the execution of his will, absolute depository of all the resources of France, rich with an immense treasury, in the flower of his age, admired, feared, and above all scrupulously obeyed, it seemed as though he had overcome all obstacles."

Such is the picture which Madame de Rémusat draws of the Emperor at the age of thirty-eight, in this autumn of 1807, and she remarks:

"Let us suppose that some one, ignorant of the past, had suddenly been thrown into Fontainebleau at this time, — it is certain that, blinded by the magnificence displayed in this royal habitation; struck by the air of authority of the master, and the obsequious reverence of the great personages who surrounded him, — this stranger would have seen, or thought that he saw, a sovereign peaceably seated upon the greatest throne in the world, with all the united rights of power and legitimacy."

As soon as the invited guests arrived at the Château they were informed of the program drawn up by the Emperor for their entertainment. The different evenings of the week were to be passed in the apartments of the various great personages. One evening the Emperor would receive, and there would be music, followed by games. Twice a week there was to be a theatrical per-

formance; on other nights, balls to be given by the Princesses Pauline and Caroline; and finally, an assembly and play in the rooms of the Empress. The princes and ministers, in turn, were to give dinners and invite all of the guests in rotation; the grand marshal and the lady of honor were to do the same, each having a table for twenty-five persons every day; and finally there was to be another table for all who were not invited elsewhere. Even the kings and princes could not dine with the Emperor except by special invitation. On certain days there was a hunt, which the guests followed on horseback, or in very elegant calèches which were provided. The Emperor liked the chase more for the exercise it gave him than for the thing itself. He often abandoned the pursuit of the stag, and wandered through the forest, lost in revery. He was a good, but very reckless horseman, and always rode small Arabians specially trained for his service.

The Emperor employed his vacation in working as usual. He rose at seven o'clock, breakfasted alone, and, the days that he did not hunt, remained in his cabinet until five or six. The ministers and secretaries came from Paris with their despatch-boxes exactly the same as though he were at Saint-Cloud. He never took account of time or distance, either for himself or any one else.

While the Emperor was occupied in his cabinet, Joséphine, always elegantly dressed, breakfasted with her daughter and her ladies, and later received in her salon the visits of the guests at the palace. She never liked to be alone, and had no taste for any kind of work. At four o'clock the Empress dismissed her callers, and

went to her room for the rites of the evening toilette, always with her an important function. Quite frequently during the week the Emperor came for his wife between five and six, and they went for a drive together before dinner. They dined at six, and afterwards went to the entertainment arranged for that evening.

The great officials who had the privilege of the *entrée* could present themselves at the apartment of the Empress. They knocked at the door, were announced by the chamberlain on duty, and admitted by command of the Emperor. If it were a woman, she took her seat in silence; if a man, he remained standing at the side of the room. The Emperor promenaded back and forth, his hands behind his back, his head bent forward, generally absorbed in his thoughts. Occasionally he asked a question and received a brief reply. Of real conversation, there was none. Every one stood in such awe of the Emperor that he feared to make any remarks. At the assemblies it was the same. Everybody around the Emperor was bored, and he was equally bored himself. One day he said to Talleyrand: " It is a singular thing: I have brought together a crowd of people at Fontainebleau; I have wanted them to be amused; I have arranged all their entertainments, yet their faces are all long, and every one has the air of being tired and depressed." " The trouble is," replied Talleyrand, " that you cannot regulate pleasure by the beat of the drum. Here, as in the army, you have always the air of saying to each one of us, *Allons, messieurs et mesdames, en avant marche!*"

The Emperor wished two plays given each week, which must always be different. In addition to these

performances, by the Comédie-Française, there were representations of Italian opera. The plays were always tragedies, often Corneille, sometimes Racine, but rarely Voltaire, whom Napoleon did not like. The whole Court was bored to death by these interminable tragedies, and yawned or dozed. There was never any applause, and the play was received in cold silence. The Emperor himself either slept, or was buried in thought. For the opera, the best Italian singers had been engaged, at large salaries, but they were listened to without a sign of interest.

The fêtes and spectacles were nominally in charge of M. de Talleyrand, the grand chamberlain, but the real work was done by the first chamberlain, M. de Rémusat, to whom Talleyrand said one day: "I am sorry for you, for you must amuse the *unamusable!*" The dreamy, discontented disposition which the Emperor displayed on all occasions cast a sombre veil over all the assemblies and balls at Fontainebleau.

About eight o'clock the Court in gala costume assembled in the apartment where the entertainment was to be given that evening. While awaiting the arrival of Their Majesties there was no conversation. The Empress came first, gracefully traversed the salon, took her place, and then, like the others, awaited in silence the entry of the Emperor. Finally he came, and took his seat beside her. He watched the dancing with a bored look, which was not conducive to pleasure, and naturally no one enjoyed the evening. He soon took his departure, and almost immediately the assembly broke up.

While the Court was at Fontainebleau the Emperor

had an *affaire* with a beautiful young woman named Gazzani. Talleyrand had found her in Italy, and had persuaded the Emperor to give her a place in his household as reader for the Empress, while her husband was made a receiver general. She was tall, beautifully formed, with magnificent dark eyes, and a very attractive face. In a Court where there were many lovely women, she was generally considered the most beautiful of all. She had a very sweet, submissive disposition, and yielded to the desires of the Emperor from a kind of conviction that it was her duty not to resist him. At the same time she displayed the greatest devotion for the Empress, who closed her eyes to this little episode. As a result, this liaison was of brief duration, and attracted very little attention.

Another love affair which caused much talk, but was also very brief, was the sudden passion which the new King of Westphalia conceived for the charming young Duchesse of Baden. Jérôme had not even waited until his honeymoon was over before beginning a violent flirtation, and Catherine was very jealous. Stéphanie, who had not yet learned to appreciate her husband, was gay and frivolous and naturally coquette. Jérôme danced with her at all the balls, while Catherine, who had inherited from her father a tendency to corpulence and did not dance, was forced to look sadly on. Finally, one evening when Jérôme had been more than usually attentive to Stéphanie, Catherine suddenly burst into tears, and fell from her chair in a dead faint. The ball was interrupted, and she was carried into an adjoining salon. The Emperor addressed a few sharp words to his brother: Jérôme rushed after his wife, threw himself

on his knees by her side, and with a thousand caresses endeavored to restore her to consciousness. A few minutes later the young couple retired to their apartment.

The following day, Napoleon commanded Joséphine to have a plain talk with her lively cousin, and bring her to reason. Stéphanie took the reproof in good part, and both of the young people were too much afraid of the Emperor to renew what had been after all an innocent flirtation.

At this time, the Emperor no longer showed his partiality for Stéphanie. He seemed to have forgotten entirely the rules prescribed for her as his adopted daughter before her marriage, and only accorded her the rank and precedence of a princesse of the Confederation of the Rhine, which placed her below the queens and the imperial princesses. From that time on, Stéphanie was a model of decorum in her conduct. She showed no regret on leaving for Baden with her husband, and this seems to have been the beginning of the perfect accord which afterwards united them.

In the meantime Hortense was living in the greatest possible seclusion. Her health was very delicate, and the memory of her lost child was always with her. The Emperor displayed for her much affection and esteem. At the bottom of his heart he undoubtedly had more love for her than for his brother, but the family spirit was too strong for him to take any active part in their quarrels. He had consented to her remaining in Paris until after her confinement, but he continued to speak of her return to Holland. For her part, Hortense was equally firm in her determination never to return to this bleak country where she had experienced so much

trouble and sorrow. She said to the Emperor: "My reputation is tarnished, my health is lost, I look for no more happiness in life; banish me from your Court if you wish; shut me up in a convent; I desire neither throne nor fortune. Give peace to my mother, distinction to Eugène who deserves it, but let me live tranquil and alone."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1807

PROJECTS OF DIVORCE

The Question of Divorce First Seriously Considered — Napoleon Asks Joséphine to Take the Initiative — She Refuses — Fouché's Letter to the Empress — Napoleon Pretends Ignorance — He Writes Fouché to Cease Meddling — Talleyrand's Attitude — Fouché Influences Public Opinion — End of the Fêtes — Death of Joséphine's Mother — Napoleon's Trip to Italy — His Interview with Lucien — He Adopts Eugène — His Letters to Joséphine

DURING the two months that the Court was at Fontainebleau the question of divorce was broached seriously for the first time. Talleyrand, who was more familiar than any one else with the projects of the Emperor, was very quietly working to bring the matter about; but he wished, at the same time, to have the Emperor make a great alliance, and above all to be himself the one to negotiate it. Caroline and Murat were also laying their plans to overcome the lingering affection which still bound Napoleon to Joséphine, and which alone kept her on the throne. Allied with them were Joséphine's former friend, Fouché, and the Secretary of State, Maret, who was secretly jealous of the great and well-deserved European reputation of Talleyrand, whom he hoped to supplant in the councils of the Emperor.

As stated above, the death of the little crown-prince had made a change in the plans of the Emperor; his victories, in increasing his power, had extended his ideas of grandeur, and both his vanity and his policy dictated an alliance with one of the European royal families. At the time of his return from Tilsit there was some talk of the daughter of the King of Saxony in this connection, but this princesse was at least thirty years old, and far from beautiful; her father only reigned by the grace of Napoleon, and such an alliance would not have increased the prestige of the Emperor.

The conferences at Tilsit had justly increased the pride of Napoleon. The fascination he had exercised over the young Czar, the ready assent given to all his projects, had produced in his mind the thought of a still more intimate alliance. But on his return to Joséphine, after a separation of ten months, the old ties which so firmly bound him to her had been again renewed.

In speaking one day to the Empress of the quarrels of Louis and Hortense, and the delicate health of their only remaining child, Napoleon said that some day he might perhaps be constrained by the demands of public policy to take a wife who could give him an heir. In broaching the subject he displayed much emotion. " If such a thing comes about, Joséphine," he said, " you must aid me to make such a sacrifice. I shall count upon all your affection for me to take the responsibility for this forced separation. You will assume the initiative, will you not, and, realizing my position, have the courage to decide yourself upon this rupture? "

The Empress understood too well the character of her husband to fall into this trap, and precipitate by an

imprudent word the catastrophe which she so much dreaded. Therefore, so far from giving him the hope that by her action she would assume the odium of such a rupture, she assured him that, while she was always ready to obey his orders, she never would take the initiative. She made this reply in the calm and dignified manner which she knew how to assume with Napoleon, and which was always effective with him.

Even in her private intercourse with the Emperor, Joséphine for some time past had abandoned the old familiar *tutoiement,* and she now said:

" Sire, you are the master, and you will decide upon my fate. When you command me to leave the Tuileries, I shall instantly obey; but at least you must order it in a positive manner. I am your wife: I have been crowned by you in the presence of the Pope; such honors impose the obligation of not resigning them voluntarily. If you divorce me, all France will know that it is you who drives me away, and will be ignorant neither of my obedience nor my profound grief."

This form of reply, which was always the same, did not offend the Emperor, and often moved him to tears: in fact he was torn by many conflicting emotions. On the one hand he sincerely felt that State policy demanded an heir to the throne; on the other, he knew that Joséphine was loved by the people, and he hesitated to brave public opinion by repudiating her.

When Joséphine confided her doubts and fears to Hortense, she was far from finding a sympathetic listener. Her daughter's only reply was: " How can one regret a throne? "

Two or three weeks before the end of the visit of the

Court to Fontainebleau, Fouché arrived one morning from Paris. After a long private interview with the Emperor in his cabinet, he was invited to dinner — a most unusual honor. Towards midnight, when all the guests in the château had gone to their rooms, M. de Rémusat was summoned to the apartment of the Empress. He found her half-undressed, her hair down, and her face discomposed. She dismissed her attendants, and, crying that she was lost, shoved into the hands of the chamberlain a long letter signed by Fouché. In this communication he began by protesting his former devotion for her, and assured her that it was on account of this feeling that he ventured to face her situation and that of the Emperor. He pictured the Emperor as at the zenith of his power, sovereign-master of France, but responsible to that same France for the present, and for the future which she had confided to him. " It is useless to try to dissimulate the fact, Madame," he continued, " that the political future of France is compromised by the lack of an heir to the Emperor. As Minister of Police, I am in a position to know public opinion, and I know that there is much disquietude over the matter of the succession to such an empire. Figure to yourself, Madame, the stability which the throne of His Majesty would possess to-day if it were founded upon the existence of a son! "

This advantage was ably developed at length, as indeed it might well be. Then he spoke of the conflict between the conjugal tenderness of the Emperor and his public policy; he foresaw that the Emperor would never make up his mind to dictate so grievous a sacrifice; he therefore ventured to advise Her Majesty to

FOUCHÉ, DUC D'OTRANTE

make herself a courageous effort, and to immolate herself for France. He drew a most pathetic picture of the glory that such an action would give her now and in the future. The letter ended with the assurance that the Emperor was ignorant of this step; that the writer feared it would displease him; and the Empress was solicited to keep the matter a profound secret.

It was obvious that Fouché would never have ventured to write such a letter without the knowledge of the Emperor. "What shall I do?" cried Joséphine; "how shall I meet this storm?" Rémusat advised her to see the Emperor, either that night or the first thing in the morning, ask him to read the letter, and observe his face while he did so. Also, to express her indignation at this uncalled-for advice, and to reiterate her determination never to accept anything but a positive command from the Emperor himself.

Joséphine adopted this advice, and, as the hour was late, deferred her interview with the Emperor until morning. When she showed Napoleon the letter, he pretended to be very angry. He assured her that he was entirely ignorant of this step; that Fouché had displayed a zeal most uncalled-for; that if the minister had not already left for Paris he would have taken him sharply to task; that he would punish Fouché if she so desired, and even dismiss him from his position in the ministry. He was very affectionate with Joséphine, but she was far from being reassured by his explanation and promises.

Talleyrand, when informed of this matter, expressed the opinion that the letter of Fouché was ridiculous and improper, and advised that the Empress should reply,

in a very dignified tone, to the effect that she did not require his services as an intermediary between herself and the Emperor. She wrote such a letter, which was read and approved by Talleyrand, and then submitted to the Emperor, who did not venture to censure it.

When Fouché returned a few days later, the Empress treated him very coldly, but he did not appear to notice her manner. Napoleon said to Joséphine: "He acted from an excess of zeal: you must not treasure it up against him. It is enough that we are determined to reject his advice, and that you know well that I cannot live without you."

On the 5 November the Emperor wrote Fouché: "For a fortnight past you have made foolish blunders: it is time that they came to an end, and that you ceased to meddle, directly or indirectly, with a matter which does not in any way concern you. Such is my wish!"

The outcome of the whole affair was a temporary renewal of the former close relations between Napoleon and Joséphine. He displayed for her all of his old affection, and little by little her fears were dissipated.

During all this period, the Empress was guided by the advice of Talleyrand. When Madame de Rémusat expressed her surprise at his course, he replied: "There is no one here in the palace who should not wish to have this woman remain by the side of the Emperor. She is kind and good; she has the art of calming him; she takes an interest in the affairs of everybody. If we see a princesse arrive here, you will see the Emperor break with the entire Court, and we shall all be crushed." These were wise words and true, and almost

convince one that Talleyrand at the moment was sincere.

It is not difficult to understand the motives which actuated Fouché and Talleyrand in this somewhat involved affair. Fouché had sufficient perspicacity to realize that with the Emperor the question of policy would in the end outweigh all other considerations. He had therefore joined the party of Caroline, who detested all the Beauharnais, and, for personal reasons also, wished to see her brother enter the family of some European sovereign. Once committed to this undertaking, Fouché used without scruples his position as minister of police to work up public opinion. He instructed his secret agents to discuss in the cafés and other public places the necessity of an heir to the Emperor. These suggestions were reported by other agents to the minister, and by him to the Emperor, who easily became convinced that the people were more interested in the question than was probably the case.

With his usual shrewdness, Talleyrand took advantage of the sentiment thus worked up by his rival, to turn it to his own personal benefit. At the bottom of his heart Talleyrand may not have been in favor of the divorce; but if it must be, he wished to bring it about in his own time and in his own way, and above all to get the credit. The Murat coterie favored strengthening the alliance already concluded with Russia by a matrimonial connection. But Talleyrand, better informed regarding foreign relations, knew that the mother of the Czar would never consent to give the hand of one of her daughters to the " murderer " of the Duc d'Enghien. Besides, the affair of Spain was about

to come to the front, and the time was not opportune to bring forward the question of divorce. Moved, therefore, both by sentiment and by policy, Talleyrand for the time being opposed and check-mated the efforts of Fouché.

Finally the fêtes at Fontainebleau came to an end, much to the delight of every one. When the Emperor called for a statement of the expenditures he was surprised to learn that the total did not exceed 150,000 francs. The last visit of Louis the Sixteenth had cost about two millions. The imperial household, under Duroc, the grand-marshal of the palace, was run with military discipline and economy. The servants were always at their posts and scrupulous in the performance of their duties: everything moved like clock-work. No detail was overlooked by the marshal, and he reported directly to the Emperor, who personally supervised and directed the work of the household.

While the Court was still at Fontainebleau Joséphine received the news of the death of her mother, who passed away on the 2 June 1807, at the age of seventy, at her residence in Martinique. Joséphine, who dearly loved her mother, had done everything possible to persuade her to come to live in France, where she would have received a warm welcome. But this venerable lady preferred her modest and quiet home to all the splendors of the imperial palaces.

On the 16 November the Emperor left Fontainebleau for Italy, and Joséphine returned to Paris. She would have liked to make the trip with him, to see her son Eugène and the little granddaughter who bore her

name, but this time Napoleon absolutely refused his consent. He said that he would only be gone two or three weeks, that the weather would be very cold, and that she had better await his return at the Tuileries.

On the 20 November the Emperor crossed Mont-Cenis in a raging snow storm and reached Turin the same evening. The following day he proceeded to Milan, where he was welcomed by Eugène. During the five days that he passed in the city there were religious ceremonies at the cathedral, reviews, and a gala performance at the Scala. On the 28 November he arrived at Venice, where he had with him his brother Joseph, King of Naples; his sister Élisa, Princesse de Lucques; Prince Eugène, Viceroy of Italy; the King and Queen of Bavaria; Murat and Berthier.

After spending ten days at Venice, the Emperor went to Mantua, where on the 13 December he had a long interview with his brother Lucien. It will be remembered that Lucien, in opposition to the wishes of the First Consul, had married his mistress, Madame Jouberthou. Napoleon desired him to get a divorce, and marry Marie-Louise, daughter of King Charles of Spain, and widow of the King of Etruria, but Lucien spurned this brilliant alliance. In the spring of 1804, he went into voluntary exile at Rome, where he was followed by his mother, who refused to return to Paris even for the Coronation.

During the evening the Emperor sent his secretary, Méneval, to find Lucien at the inn where he was staying, and conduct him to the palace. Lucien greeted his brother very coldly, and with much dignity. After once more reproaching Lucien for his marriage, and indulg-

ing in some threats as to what he would do if his brother still refused to meet his wishes, the Emperor made this proposition: He would recognize as members of the Imperial family the daughters of Lucien by both his marriages; he would consider his second marriage as legal, but would not recognize his wife as an Imperial princesse, or consider as legitimate the son born before their marriage. If Lucien would divorce his wife, the Emperor would place him in the same position as his brothers, in the Imperial family, and would give him a throne, probably that of Portugal. He could continue to live quietly with Madame Jouberthou, if he wished, but she could never participate in the honors of royalty.

Lucien refused absolutely to divorce his wife, and declined to be separated from his children: that was his last word. During this long interview, which lasted more than six hours, Napoleon exhausted all of his resources, both in the way of threats and of promises, in the effort to frighten or persuade his brother to comply with his wishes, but all in vain. At the end of the interview the brothers parted with much emotion, and Lucien returned to Rome.

The next day the Emperor left for Milan, where on the 17 December he issued the famous Decree declaring the British Isles in a state of blockade both by land and by sea.

On the 20 December, in the grand hall of the Royal Palace, Napoleon adopted Eugène as his son, and as his presumptive successor to the crown of Italy. At the same time he gave to Eugène the title of Prince of Venice, and to his daughter that of Princesse de Bologna.

On the 24 December the Emperor left Milan for Paris, where he arrived on the night of the first day of January 1808. During this long absence of nearly seven weeks Napoleon only wrote Joséphine three short letters:

To the Empress, at Paris

MILAN, 25 November 1807

I have been here, mon amie, for two days. I am very glad that I did not bring you; you would have suffered terribly in the passage of Mont-Cenis, where a storm detained me twenty-four hours.

I found Eugène very well; I am well satisfied with him. The princesse is ill; I have been to see her at Monza; she has had a *fausse couche,* but is better.

Adieu, mon amie.

NAPOLEON

VENICE, 30 November 1807

I am in receipt your letter of the 22 November. I have been at Venice for two days. The weather is very bad, which however has not prevented me from traversing the lagoons to see the different forts.

I am glad to hear that you are enjoying yourself at Paris.

The King of Bavaria, with his family, also the Princesse Élisa, are here.

After the 2 December (anniversary of the Coronation), which I shall pass here, I shall be on my way home, and very glad to see you.

Adieu, mon amie. NAPOLEON

UDINE, 11 December 1807

I have received, mon amie, your letter of the 3 December, from which I see that you were much pleased with the

Jardin des Plantes. I am now at the most distant point of my trip; it is possible that I shall soon be at Paris, where I shall be very glad to see you again. The weather here has not yet been very cold, but is very rainy. I have taken advantage of the last moment of the season, for I suppose that by Christmas the winter will have set in.

Adieu, mon amie.

Tout à toi
NAPOLEON

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1808

THE EMPRESS AT BAYONNE

Josèphine's Fear of Divorce — Irresolution of the Emperor — A Remarkable Episode — Marriage of Mlle. de Tascher — The Spanish Crisis — Abdication of King Charles — Murat Enters Madrid — The Emperor Goes to Bayonne — His Sojourn at Marrac — Letters to the Empress at Bordeaux — Birth of Louis-Napoleon — Joy of Napoleon and Joséphine — Charles Cedes the Spanish Crown — Joseph Appointed King — The Baylen Disaster — Return of the Emperor and Empress

WHEN Napoleon arrived at the Tuileries at nine o'clock on the evening of the first day of January 1808, Joséphine threw herself into his arms and tenderly wished him a Happy New Year. Since the visit to Fontainebleau the Empress had known little peace of mind; she lived in the constant apprehension of a renewal of the projects for a divorce. She no longer treated Napoleon with the familiarity of other days, but addressed him as a sovereign rather than as a husband.

The winter season at Paris was never more brilliant. Every evening there were concerts, balls, formal dinners. The Court of the Empress was as well attended as formerly: in outward appearances nothing had changed. Joséphine, who did the honors of the Tuileries with her usual grace, was as much admired as ever. The Em-

peror, still undecided, vacillated between the voice of his heart and the demands of State policy. He said to Talleyrand: "If I separate from my wife I shall renounce at once all the charm she brings to my private life. I must study the tastes and habits of a new and young wife. This one adapts herself in every way and knows me perfectly. Finally, I shall repay with ingratitude all that she has done for me; for me she is a tie with many people."

One evening when there was a reception at the Château, the Emperor failed to appear, and it was announced that he was indisposed. After dining with the Emperor as usual at six o'clock, Joséphine had gone to her room to change her dress for the evening. When she was ready for the reception a chamberlain came to tell her that the Emperor was ill, and she rushed to his side. She found Napoleon in a state of great nervous excitement. He wept, and pressed her in his arms, without any regard for her elegant toilette, crying: "No, my poor Joséphine, I can never leave thee!" Instead of joining her guests, Joséphine was compelled to pass the night with her husband, and it was not until morning that he recovered his equanimity. "What a devil of a man!" said Talleyrand in disgust, when the astonished assembly was curtly dismissed, "what a devil of a man, to give way continually to his first impulse, and never to know what he wants to do!"

On the first of February, at the hotel of Queen Hortense, Rue Cerutti, was celebrated the marriage of Prince d'Arenberg and Mlle. Stéphanie de Tascher, Joséphine's cousin and goddaughter, who had been created an Imperial princesse by the Emperor on the

occasion of the signing of the contract. During the Consulate her hand had been asked in marriage by General Rapp, one of the favorite aides de camp of Napoleon, but Joséphine, who retained many of the prejudices of the Ancien Régime, refused her consent. This Arenberg marriage was not a success; the princesse could not endure her husband and refused to live with him. At a later date the marriage was annulled and she espoused Comte de Guitry.

In the midst of his domestic preoccupations the Emperor had not ceased to follow closely the course of events in Spain. The Spanish Bourbons were descended from a grandson of Louis the Fourteenth, Philip of Anjou, who became King of Spain in 1700 under the title of Philip the Fifth. At the beginning of 1808 the royal family of Spain comprised the King, Charles the Fourth, a man of sixty; his wife, Marie-Louise, who was three years younger, and their son, Ferdinand, Prince of the Asturias, a boy of twenty. To this interesting group must be added the Queen's lover, Godoy, Prince of the Peace. Ferdinand had formed a plan of seizing the government, but the plot was betrayed to the King, and he was put under arrest.

Portugal had refused to accept the Berlin Decree of Napoleon, prohibiting the importation of English goods, and Napoleon had arranged with the Czar at Tilsit for the occupation and dismemberment of that country. While the above events were happening at Madrid, Junot, at the head of a French army of 25,000 men, had advanced to the gates of Lisbon. Before his arrival, the royal family embarked on the fleet and sailed for Brazil.

On the 20 February 1808 the Emperor appointed Murat his lieutenant to command the French troops in Spain, and a week later he announced to the Court of Madrid his intention to annex to the French Empire all of Spain north of the Ebro, giving the Spanish Crown, by way of compensation, all of Portugal. Alarmed at this proposition Charles made preparations to flee the country, but the news became known, there was a popular uprising, and he abdicated the throne in favor of his son.

In the meantime the French army under Murat was advancing on Madrid, and on the 23 March it entered the city. Charles now wrote the Emperor that his abdication had been forced upon him, and asked to be reinstated upon his throne. Ferdinand also presented his claims at the same time, and Napoleon invited all of the interested parties to meet him at Bayonne for a conference.

On the second day of April the Emperor quietly left Saint-Cloud, ostensibly for a visit to the South of France. He was not accompanied by Joséphine, but it was arranged that she was to follow him a few days later. Napoleon reached Bordeaux on the fourth, and Joséphine on the tenth. On the 13 April the Emperor proceeded to Bayonne. Two days after his arrival he inspected the château of Marrac, located about a league from the city, which he arranged to purchase for his residence. It was only an ordinary country mansion, and altogether too small to lodge comfortably the Emperor and his suite.

During his sojourn at Bayonne the Emperor held frequent reviews of his troops, passing through on their

way to Spain, as many as a hundred thousand men defiling under his eyes. He went out daily and loved the promenades upon the Adour towards Boucau. He never announced in advance either the hour or the course of these excursions, often changing the direction and returning to the château from the point where he was least expected. Often he directed his steps towards a dove-cote in the form of a small tower, which was located at the extremity of the outer wall of the park. From there he descended to the banks of the Nive, and went nearly every day, sometimes on foot, and sometimes in a boat, to visit his sister Caroline, who was living at Lauga.

On the 20 April the Emperor received Prince Ferdinand, who arrived that day, and entertained him at dinner. Six days later the Prince de la Paix appeared, and had a long conference with Napoleon. On the 27 April Joséphine came from Bordeaux. During this fortnight the Emperor sent Joséphine four letters:

To the Empress, at Bordeaux

BAYONNE, 16 April 1808

I arrived here very well, but somewhat fatigued by the route, which is dismal and very poor.

I am very glad that you remained, for the houses here are very small and very bad.

I am going to-day to a little house in the country, half a league from the city.

Adieu, mon amie; good health.

NAPOLEON

17 April 1808

I have your letter of the 15 April. What you tell me of the country landowner gives me pleasure; go sometimes and pass the day there.

I have given orders to add 20,000 francs a month to your allowance, during the trip, to date from the first of April.

I am horribly lodged. In a half-hour I am going to change, and take up my residence in a small country house at a distance of half a league. The infante Don Carlos, and five or six Spanish grandees are here; the Prince of the Asturias is twenty leagues away. King Charles and the Queen are arriving. I do not know where I shall lodge all these people. Everything is still at the inn. My troops in Spain are well.

It took me a moment to understand your *gentillesses;* I laughed over your souvenirs. You women certainly have a memory!

My health is quite good, and I love you very dearly. It is my desire that you be very friendly with everybody at Bordeaux; my affairs did not permit me to do so personally.

NAPOLEON

21 April 1808

I have your letter of the 19 April. Yesterday I had the Prince of the Asturias and his suite to dinner; that gave me much trouble. I await Charles the Fourth and the Queen.

My health is good. I am now quite well established in the country.

Adieu, mon amie; I always receive news of you with the greatest pleasure.

NAPOLEON

BAYONNE, 23 April 1808

Mon amie, Hortense has a son; this has greatly rejoiced me. I am not surprised that you do not speak of it, for

your letter is dated the twenty-first, and she was confined during the night of the twentieth.

You can set out the twenty-sixth, pass the night at Mont-de-Marsan, and arrive here the twenty-seventh. I am arranging for you here a small country house beside the one which I occupy. My health is good.

I am looking for Charles the Fourth and his wife.

Adieu, mon amie.

NAPOLEON

The child referred to in the Emperor's last letter was Louis-Napoleon, the future Napoleon the Third, Emperor of the French. He was born in Paris on the 20 April 1808 at the town-house of Queen Hortense, in Rue Cerutti, and not at the Tuileries, as erroneously stated by many historians. By the express orders of the Emperor, who sent Hortense a letter of congratulations, he was called Charles-Louis-Napoleon, in honor of his grandfather Bonaparte, his father, and his uncle.

Joséphine's first letter to her daughter, written on the 23 April, begins in a jubilant tone: "I am at the summit of joy, my dear Hortense. . . . I know Napoleon is consoled at not having a sister and that he already loves his brother very much. Kiss them both for me."

Two days later she wrote again: "I am just in receipt, my dear Hortense, of a letter from the Emperor . . . ; he is perfectly delighted. At the same time he summons me to rejoin him at Bayonne. You can imagine, my dear daughter, that it is a great pleasure for me not to be away from the Emperor, so I set out early to-morrow morning. I am pleased at the news I receive of your health. I beg you always to take good

care of yourself, and above all not to receive company these first few days. I cannot write you again for two or three days, but shall think of you every moment. I embrace you. Adieu, my dear Hortense."

Joséphine had the great satisfaction of finding Napoleon in a most loving mood toward her. He spent all of his spare time with her and displayed unusual signs of good humor. One day, on the beach, undeterred by the presence of the escort, he chased her over the sands and pushed her into the water; another time, he picked up a shoe which fell off her foot as she got into a carriage, and flung it away, in great glee over the idea that she would have to go home without one.

On the last day of April the Spanish sovereigns arrived at the government palace at Bayonne; the Emperor immediately called on them, and that evening entertained them at dinner at Marrac.

On the 5 May, when the Emperor, after déjeuner, was riding with Savary, he received the news of the uprising at Madrid three days before. He immediately galloped to Bayonne, where he had a spirited interview with Charles and his son. To Ferdinand he said: " Prince, up to this moment I have taken no stand in the controversy which has brought you here, but the blood shed at Madrid ends my irresolution. I shall never recognize as King of Spain the person who, by ordering the murder of French soldiers, has been the first to break the alliance which has so long united our two countries. . . . I have no ties except with your father: I recognize him as King, and will escort him to Madrid if he so desires."

The Prince made no reply, but Charles, with the visions of Charles the First and Louis the Sixteenth ever troubling his thoughts, had no desire to remount his precarious throne. That same evening, by a treaty signed for the Emperor by Duroc, and for the King by the Prince de la Paix, Charles ceded to Napoleon the crown of Spain and of the Indies in exchange for the use of the château and forest of Compiègne, the title in perpetuity to the château of Chambord, and a civil list of seven millions and a half to be paid by the French Government. By another convention, signed on the 10 May, Ferdinand also ceded his rights to the crown. He was accorded the title in France of Royal Highness; received for himself and his descendants the château of Navarre; and was given an allowance of a million francs. Such was the price of the magnificent heritage of Charles-Quint!

On the 4 June, by an official act, Napoleon ceded to his brother Joseph all of the rights acquired under the above treaties. Three days later the new King of Spain arrived at Bayonne, and that evening attended a grand dinner given by the Emperor at Marrac, at which were also present the members of the Grand Junta of Spain, who had been summoned by Napoleon two weeks before.

Napoleon had reached the turning point of his career. With easy confidence and a light heart he embarked on an enterprise which was to baffle him at every stage, to drain his resources, to cost him three hundred thousand valuable lives, and to end in absolute failure. At Saint Helena he said: "It was the Spanish ulcer which ruined me!"

The first week in July the Junta accepted the new constitution drawn up for Joseph under Napoleon's orders, and a few days later the new king left for Madrid.

Napoleon started homeward again in company with Joséphine. It was arranged that they should travel together as far as Toulouse, whence the Emperor was to go to Bordeaux, and Joséphine to take the waters at Barèges. The Emperor reached Bordeaux on the 31 July, and there he learned, two days later, of the capitulation of Dupont at Baylen with an army of 20,000 men, and the flight of King Joseph from Madrid. It was the first serious disaster to the imperial arms, and Napoleon was wild with rage at this blow to his prestige.

The Emperor at once realized the necessity of his own presence in the Peninsula, but before going there he wished to organize a well-equipped army, and also to assure himself of the solidarity of his alliance with the Czar. This meant a return to Paris, and Joséphine received orders to abandon her trip to Barèges and rejoin the Emperor.

On his way home the Emperor visited Rochefort and La Rochelle, and then in company with Joséphine, who had rejoined him, he proceeded by way of Tours and Blois to Saint-Cloud, where he arrived on the eve of his fête.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1808–1809

A YEAR OF ANXIETY

The Erfurt Conference — Joséphine Left at Paris — Napoleon Opens His Heart to Alexander — Talleyrand Instructed to Begin Negotiations for an Alliance — Napoleon's Letters to Joséphine — He Leaves for Spain — The Peninsula Campaign — Pursuit of the English — Bad News from Paris — The Emperor's Correspondence — His Return to Paris — Scene at the Tuileries — The Succession Plot — Joséphine's Revelations — She Accompanies Napoleon to Strasbourg — The Emperor Wounded at Ratisbon — His Letters During the Campaign — End of the War — Napoleon Leaves for Fontainebleau

THE last year that Joséphine was destined to wear the imperial crown was for her a period of constant anxiety. She knew that the divorce was inevitable, and that her days upon the throne were numbered. Before the fatal decree was passed, however, she had yet many trials to endure. From the date that the Emperor left for Erfurt to that eventful evening in December 1809, she saw but little of her husband, who was absent from France the greater part of the time.

Returning from Bayonne on the 14 August, the Emperor immediately began preparations on a large scale to put down the revolt in Spain and restore his brother to the throne. For the sake of his own prestige also it

was necessary as soon as possible to repair the damage done by the capitulation of General Dupont. He had therefore decided to enter Spain himself at the head of the Grand Army, the invincible veterans of Austerlitz, Jena and Friedland. Before leaving for the Peninsula, however, he wished to feel certain that there would be no change in the political situation during his absence. Above all he wanted the assurance that his new ally, the Czar, was still as favorably disposed towards him as when they parted at Tilsit the previous year. He therefore suggested an interview, and Alexander accepted. The meeting took place at the little German city of Erfurt, and lasted from the 27 September to the 14 October. All of the allies of the Emperor were present: the kings of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Saxony and Westphalia; the Prince-Primate, and all the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine. The actors of the Comédie-Française, summoned from Paris, played before a "parterre of kings."

To her great regret, Joséphine was not allowed to accompany the Emperor, and she divined that her divorce would be one of the subjects of discussion. In this she was not mistaken. The Czar had two sisters of a marriageable age: the grand duchesses Catherine and Anne, and Napoleon had thought of the elder as a possible wife. At one of their conferences the Emperor broached the subject by saying to Alexander:

"This life of agitation wearies me. I need rest, and look forward to nothing so much as the moment when without anxiety I can seek the joys of domestic life, which appeals to all my tastes. But this happiness is not for me. What domesticity is there without children?

And can I have any? My wife is ten years older than myself. I must ask your pardon. It is perhaps ridiculous of me to tell you all this, but I am yielding to the impulse of my heart which finds pleasure in opening itself out to you."

It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Napoleon was not yielding to the impulse of his heart, but to the calculations of his ambition, or the demands of his policy. He was broaching the subject, which he proposed to have followed up by Talleyrand, whom he had brought to Erfurt for that very purpose. He was about to commit these delicate negotiations to that wily diplomat, who had already made up his mind to betray him.

The evening of that same day the Emperor had a long conversation with Talleyrand, regarding the divorce. As reported by Talleyrand in his *Mémoires,* he said:

"My destiny requires it, and the tranquillity of France demands it. I have no successor. Joseph amounts to nothing, and he has only daughters. It is I who must found the dynasty, and I cannot do so without allying myself to a princess who belongs to one of the great ruling houses of Europe. The Emperor Alexander has sisters: one of them is of suitable age. Take the matter up with Romantzoff; tell him that as soon as this Spanish affair is settled, I will enter into all the Czar's plans for the partition of Turkey. You will not lack for other arguments, for I know that you are a partisan of the divorce: the Empress Joséphine is also aware of the fact, I can inform you."

Talleyrand said in reply that he thought it would be

better for him to take the matter up directly with the Czar, instead of his minister, and Napoleon acquiesced. Talleyrand, who well knew the feelings of the mother of Alexander, instead of loyally furthering the plans of his master, suggested to the Czar a dilatory policy, which would thwart the plans of Napoleon, without arousing his resentment. The unprincipled minister embraced this opportunity to begin to weave the plot which was finally to bring about the fall of the man he had always secretly detested.

During his absence the Emperor sent Joséphine only three letters, all of them brief and insignificant. In the first, written two days after his arrival, he expressed his satisfaction with the Czar. In the second, ten days later, he says: " I have just hunted on the battle-field of Jena. We took breakfast on the spot where I passed the night at my bivouac. I attended a ball at Weimar. The Emperor Alexander dances; but I, no: forty years are forty years! " In his last letter, which bears no date, he again speaks of his satisfaction with Alexander, and says, " if the Czar were a woman I should be in love with him."

In spite of his great genius Napoleon was the dupe of this young Emperor, who, he thought, was his friend. From this interview he gained nothing except a breathing spell during which he could proceed, without danger of immediate interruption, to regulate his affairs in Spain.

Between his return from Erfurt, and his departure for Spain, Napoleon spent only ten days with Joséphine at Saint-Cloud. During this time their relations were somewhat strained. The Emperor appeared em-

barrassed in the presence of his wife, as though he feared that, through some indiscretion, a report of his matrimonial projects might have reached her ears; and Joséphine, who both desired and feared to know the truth, did not venture to ask any questions. As usual, she wished to accompany the Emperor to the frontier, and it was almost by main force that he prevented her from entering the carriage which bore him away.

Leaving Saint-Cloud on the 29 October, the Emperor reached Bayonne on the 3 November; a month later he was at the gates of Madrid, and the city capitulated the following day. During the three weeks which he spent at the capital, Napoleon resided at a small country mansion, Chamartin, a few miles north of the city. He was constantly occupied with plans for the upbuilding of the country. He had reinstated his brother on the throne, and if there had been time for the new institutions to take root, Spain to-day would be a far more progressive country.

In the meantime, an English army under Sir John Moore had advanced on Burgos to cut the French line of communications, and on the 22 December the Emperor left Madrid with his Guard, to meet this new offensive. Moore learned of his danger in time and beat a hasty retreat. When he was at Astorga, on the first day of January 1809, Napoleon received a despatch from his old friend and aide de camp Lavalette, telling him of the intrigues of Talleyrand and Fouché with Murat and Caroline, and the armament of Austria. He turned over the pursuit of the English to Ney and Soult, and started for Valladolid. On the 17 January he set out for Paris, covering the distance of

thirty leagues from Valladolid to Burgos in the remarkable time of six hours, upon his own horses, arranged in six relays. The following day he left this country, which he alone could have conquered, which he never was to see again, and which was destined to ruin his Empire. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 23 January he was back in the Tuileries.

During his absence of twelve weeks Napoleon sent Joséphine fourteen letters, some of them brief and insignificant. The first five, from Marrac, Tolosa, Vittoria, Burgos, and Arranda, tell only of his progress, and the state of his health. After this, his letters are longer and more interesting.

To the Empress, at Paris

(Chamartin), 7 December 1808

I am in receipt your letter of the 28 (November). I am glad to hear that you are well. . . . My health is good. The weather here is like the last half of May at Paris. It is warm, and we have no fire, unless the night is cool.

Madrid is tranquil. All my affairs are going well.

Adieu, mon amie.

Tout à toi
Napoleon

(Chamartin), 10 December 1808

Mon amie, I have your letter. You tell me that the weather is bad at Paris; here we are having the finest in the world. Tell me, I pray you, what Hortense means by her reforms: they say she is discharging her servants? Has any one refused her what she needs? Send me a word on the subject; the reforms are not in good taste.

Adieu, mon amie. . . . All here goes very well, and I pray you to take good care of yourself.

NAPOLEON

(CHAMARTIN), 21 December 1808

You should have returned to the Tuileries the 12 (December). I hope that you have been satisfied with your apartments. . . .

Adieu, mon amie. I am well: the weather is rainy, and a little cold.

NAPOLEON

(CHAMARTIN), 22 December 1808

I leave immediately to manœuvre the English, who appear to have received their reinforcements, and to desire to make their swagger (*faire les crânes*). The weather is fine; my health perfect. Have no anxiety.

NAPOLEON

BENEVENTE, 31 December 1808

Mon amie, I have been in pursuit of the English for several days, but they flee in terror. In order not to retard their retreat for a half-day, they have basely abandoned the wreck of the Romana army. More than one hundred baggage-wagons have already been taken. The weather is very bad.

Adieu, mon amie. Bessières with 10,000 cavalry is at Astorga.

Happy New Year to everybody! NAPOLEON

BENEVENTE, 5 January 1809

Mon amie, I am writing only a line. The English are completely routed. I have ordered the Duc de Dalmatie (Soult) to pursue them vigorously (*l'épée dans les reins*). I am well. The weather is bad.

Adieu, mon amie. NAPOLEON

(Vallodolid), 8 January 1809

I have your letters of the 23 and 26 (December). I am sorry to hear that you are suffering from your teeth. I have been here for two days. The weather is seasonable. The English are embarking. I am well.

Adieu, mon amie.

I am writing to Hortense. Eugène has a daughter.

Tout à toi

Napoleon

(Vallodolid). 9 January 1809

Moustache (a courier) has brought me your letter of the 31 December. I see, my friend, that you are sad, and that you are very anxious. Austria will not go to war with me. If she does, I have 150,000 men in Germany, as many on the Rhine, and 400,000 Germans to meet her. Russia will not abandon me. They are mad in Paris; all goes well.

I shall be in Paris as soon as I think it necessary. I warn you to beware of apparitions; one of these fine days at two o'clock in the morning. . . .

But adieu, mon amie; I am well, and ever yours

Napoleon

On the afternoon of the 23 January, the day of his return to Paris, all of the ministers and grand officers of the State called at the Tuileries to pay their homage to the Emperor. In the presence of this distinguished assembly, Napoleon severely rebuked Talleyrand and Fouché for the disgraceful intrigue which they had carried on during his absence. This reproof was not the cause of their hostility to the Emperor, as often stated, but it was the signal for the secret war which they levied against him from that time on.

During the Campaign of Poland, in 1807, and again during the absence of the Emperor in Spain, the following year, the possibility of his death, and its effect on the dynasty, were seriously discussed at Paris. There were well-founded rumors of a project to place Murat on the throne, in case anything happened to Napoleon. Fouché and Talleyrand were in the plot, and the warmest advocate, if not the real instigator of the plan, was Napoleon's ambitious sister Caroline.

In this connection there is a record in the *Journal* of Stanislas Girardin of a conversation which he had with Joséphine on the last day of February 1809, after his return from Spain. The Empress said to him:

"While you were in Spain there were some curious *rapprochements;* irreconcilable enemies [Fouché and Talleyrand] have suddenly become reconciled; men who never saw each other have been seen together frequently. . . . This clique is powerful, and braves us; Fouché is its soul.

"When Murat was given the throne of Naples, all the journals under the control of the police sang his praises. . . . Fouché said openly that Murat was the only successor of the Emperor, the only one who could inspire Europe with fear, and the only one who enjoyed the confidence of the Army. He wrote a letter to the Emperor in which he stated positively that France did not want any of his brothers as a successor. Fortunately the eyes of Bonaparte are opened since his return. The letter of which I speak is in existence: it is in the hands of Méneval [the Emperor's secretary]."

In spite of the assertions of Lanfrey and other his-

torians, there is little doubt of the existence of this plot, but the Austrian menace probably had more weight in determining the Emperor to return from Spain. Austria thought that the moment was opportune to attempt to recover her lost possessions. The Archduke Charles, who was in command of the army, had made a supreme effort to raise a force capable of meeting Napoleon, and he had done his work well.

Late on the 12 April Napoleon was informed by a semaphore message that the Austrian army had crossed the Inn and invaded the territory of his ally the King of Bavaria. At daybreak the next morning, accompanied by Joséphine, he started for Strasbourg, where he arrived in forty-eight hours. He left the Empress there and immediately crossed the Rhine.

During the following week, in one of the most brilliant operations of his career, the Emperor won two decisive victories, and completely crushed the Austrian offensive. Eighteen days later he was once more quartered in the palace of Schœnbrunn at Vienna.

On the 23 April, before Ratisbon, Napoleon was slightly wounded by a spent bullet which struck him in the right heel. This is the only wound he is ever known to have received, except a bayonet thrust in the thigh at the siege of Toulon; but at the time of the autopsy, after his death at Saint Helena, several scars were found on his body. This seems to prove that he was hit on other occasions, but was successful in concealing the fact.

Joséphine remained for several weeks at Strasbourg, where she was visited by Hortense and her sons, by

the Queen of Westphalia and the Grand Duchess of Baden.

The story of the campaign is told in several brief letters from the Emperor:

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

DONAUWŒRTH, 18 April 1809

I reached here at four o'clock this morning, and am leaving. Everything is in motion. There is great activity in the military operations. Up to this moment there is no news.

ENNS, Noon, 6 May 1809

I have received your letter. The ball which touched me, did not wound me: it hardly grazed the tendon of Achilles. My health is very good. You have no need for anxiety.

SAINT-POLTEN, 9 May 1809

To-morrow I shall be before Vienna — just a month from the day that the Austrians crossed the Inn, and broke the peace. My health is good, the weather superb, and the soldiers very gay.

VIENNA, 12 May 1809

I am sending the brother of the Duchesse de Montebello to tell you that I am master of Vienna, and that all here is well. My health is very good.

VIENNA, 27 May 1809

I am sending a page to inform you that Eugène has joined me with his entire army; that he has performed perfectly the task that I assigned him; that he has almost entirely destroyed the force of the enemy which opposed him.

EBERSDORF, 29 May 1809

I have been here since yesterday; I am stopped by the river. The bridge has been burned: I shall cross at midnight. Everything goes as I would desire, that is to say very well. The Austrians have been struck by a thunderbolt.

It would be impossible for any one reading the last two letters to imagine that they were written a week after the terrible two-days' battle of Aspern-Essling, in which Napoleon received one of the worst reverses in his career. In his next letter he alludes to a visit of Hortense and her sons, without his permission, to the baths of Baden; and also to the death of his old companion-in-arms, Lannes, who was mortally wounded just at the end of the battle of Essling.

To the Empress, at Strasbourg

(EBERSDORF), 31 May 1809

I have your letter of the 26. I have written you that you may go to Plombières. I do not care to have you go to Baden: you must not leave France. I have ordered the two princes to return to France. I have been much afflicted by the loss of the Duc de Montebello, who died this morning. Thus all comes to an end!! If you can help to console his poor wife, do so.

(VIENNA) 9 June 1809

I am glad to learn that you are going to the waters of Plombières; they will do you good. I am well, and the weather is very fine. I note with pleasure that Hortense and her son are in France.

SCHŒNBRUNN, 16 June 1809

I am sending a page to announce that the 14, anniversary of Marengo, Eugène gained a battle against the Archduke John at Raab, in Hungary; that he has taken 3000 men, several cannon, four flags; and has pursued them very far on the road to Bude.

Early in June, Hortense left her mother to go to the baths in the Pyrenees, and Joséphine went to Plombières. Here she received the news of the great victory of Wagram, and of the armistice of Znaïm. On the 13 July the Emperor was again back at Vienna, where he remained until the final peace was signed on the 14 October. It is rather remarkable to note that, although he had Madame Walewska with him, his brief letters are more tender than for several years. In one he says: "Good-bye, mon amie, you know my feelings for Joséphine: they are unchangeable." Two letters written from Vienna in August, and one in September, are even more notable. At this time Joséphine had gone from Plombières to Malmaison. "I have heard," he writes on the 26 August, "that you are fat, fresh, and looking very well. I assure you that Vienna is not an amusing town. I should much like to be back again in Paris." Five days later he says: "I have received no letters from you for several days. The pleasures of Malmaison, the beautiful hothouses, the fine gardens, cause the absent to be forgotten. That is the way with you all, they say." Finally, on the 25 September: "I have your letter. Do not be too sure. I warn you to look after yourself well at night; for one of these early ones you will hear a great noise!"

From Munich on the 21 and 22 October 1809, the Emperor sent Joséphine the last letters he wrote during the Campaign of Wagram, the last also which she was to receive from him before the divorce.

To the Empress, at Malmaison

NYMPHENBOURG, near MUNICH, 21 October 1809

I have been here since yesterday, in good health. I do not expect to start to-morrow. I shall stop a day at Stuttgart. You will be notified twenty-four hours in advance of my arrival at Fontainebleau. It will be a treat for me to see you again, and I await the moment with impatience.

I embrace you.

Ever yours
NAPOLEON

MUNICH, (22 October 1809)

Mon amie, I start in an hour. I shall arrive at Fontainebleau the 26 or 27; you can go there with some ladies.

NAPOLEON

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1809

RETURN OF THE EMPEROR

Napoleon Arrives at Fontainebleau — He Informs Cambacérès of the Coming Divorce — His Cold Reception of Joséphine — She Finds the Door of Communication Closed — Hesitation of the Emperor — Joséphine at Forty-six — Napoleon Breaks the Fatal News — The Scene of the 30 November — A Comic Episode — The Verdict of History — Napoleon's Sincere Regret — His Interview with Hortense — The Final Fêtes — An Unfortunate *Contretemps* at Grosbois

THE Emperor reached Fontainebleau on his return from Vienna at nine o'clock on the morning of the 26 October. He had travelled with such rapidity that he arrived a day sooner than he was expected, and found no one to receive him except the concierge. To pass away the time he inspected the new apartments in the château which he had had furnished with great magnificence.

A little later Cambacérès appeared, in advance of the other courtiers. The failure of the Empress to meet him, which was in no way her fault, seemed to have put Napoleon in very bad humor, and he openly declared to the arch-chancellor his fixed intention of repudiating Joséphine, and espousing either a Russian or an Austrian princess. Cambacérès, who was devoted to the Empress, ventured some timid and respectful remonstrances, but was immediately silenced.

At this time Napoleon was truly the "spoilt child of Fortune." More absolute and more imperious than ever, he no longer allowed even a suggestion from his family or his ministers: every one obeyed and kept silent. In the words of Monsieur Thiers: "His all-powerful nature had completely blossomed out, and it was to fade away like his fortune, for nothing stands still."

Next came Fouché, and the wily Minister of Police was not slow to take advantage of the Emperor's feeling to make an indirect attack on the absent Joséphine. "There is not one of your marshals," he said, "who is not considering how to dispose of your estate if we have the misfortune to lose you. It is a case of Alexander's lieutenants eager for their kingdoms."

After these conversations with his ministers, the Emperor went to his library and began to write. Late in the afternoon he heard the noise of a carriage arriving in the court, and rushed down stairs. But it was not the Empress, and he returned to his work.

An hour later Joséphine finally arrived. She had made all possible haste to come from Saint-Cloud as soon as she was informed of the return of the Emperor. Seeing that Napoleon did not come to meet her, with a heavy heart she mounted the stairway, and entered the library, where she found Napoleon seated at his writing-table. "Ah! there you are at last," he exclaimed. "You did well to come, for I was about to leave for Saint-Cloud." At this brutal welcome, after a separation of six months, the eyes of Joséphine filled with tears, and she swayed as though she were about to fall. Napoleon at once relented, took her in his

arms, and tenderly embraced her. Joséphine then went to her apartment to change her toilette for dinner.

An hour and a half later she reappeared, resplendent in a new gown which became her marvellously. To avoid the embarrassment of a tête-à-tête meal, the Emperor invited two of his ministers, who were working with him, to dine with them. Forgetting his bad humor, he showed himself quite amiable.

But the evening was not to end without another rude shock to Joséphine. On going to her rooms for the night she discovered for the first time that, during the recent alterations to the château, the inner door which communicated with the Emperor's suite had been closed. This was a significant fact which she did not fail to appreciate. She did not dare to ask the Emperor for an explanation, but the next morning she questioned M. de Bausset, the prefect of the palace. He professed his ignorance of the change, and Joséphine said: "You may be sure that there is some mystery attached to it." To a woman of her intelligence, however, there was very little mystery about the matter. She fully understood that the divorce was now only a question of days. Yet when they left Fontainebleau for Paris on the 14 November, the Emperor had not spoken, and Joséphine again began "to hope against hope."

At Paris there was soon a regular assembly of crowned heads. The King of Saxony was already there, and a few days later there arrived the kings of Naples, Westphalia and Holland, and the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine. Ségur, the grand-master of ceremonies, had difficulty in finding suitable quarters

for so many exalted personages, and complained that he was troubled by an "embarras de rois." It was surely an irony of fate that the imperial Court had never been so brilliant and so attractive as when the gracious Joséphine was about to leave it forever.

Napoleon, usually so prompt to put his plans into execution, did not seem to be able to make up his mind to sever finally the tie which bound him to the woman who for fourteen years had been associated with his destiny, and who recalled the most brilliant days of his youth and his glory. M. de Bausset draws this sketch of Joséphine at the time of the divorce:

"The Empress was forty-six years old. No woman could have more grace of manner and bearing. Her eyes were enchanting, her smile full of charm, her voice of an extreme softness, her form noble, supple, perfect. Her toilette, always elegant and in perfect taste, made her appear much younger than she really was. But all this was as nothing beside the goodness of her heart. Her spirit was amiable; never did she wound the self-love of any one, never had she anything disagreeable to say. Her disposition was always even and placid. Devoted to Napoleon, she communicated to him, without his perceiving it, her kindness and goodness."

A still more intimate observer, Mlle. Avrillon, gives us another view of Joséphine at this same time. She says: "The Empress, constantly in tears, endeavored to hide them from the persons around her; but it did not take a very discerning eye to perceive that her happiness was destroyed forever, for she lived in a state of continual agitation. It is really impossible for me to say whether she was rendered more unhappy by the

EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE

blow she received than by all the preliminaries of the event itself. As, notwithstanding the conviction of her future, she still preserved, if not hope, at least a vague feeling of uncertainty, every time that a minister or a grand dignitary of the Empire came to see her, she pressed him with indirect questions, tormented equally by the desire to know her fate and the fear to learn it."

Finally, on the last day of November, Napoleon found the courage to break the fatal news. "What a scene for a tragedy!" he said himself, in speaking later of the events of that evening at the Tuileries.

Joséphine dined alone with the Emperor in a room adjoining his chamber on the first floor. She wore a large white hat which partly concealed her face. Not a word was spoken, and neither of them touched the courses which were placed before them, and then silently removed. After dinner they went into the salon on the other side of the palace, between the Throne Room and the Gallery of Diana. After a moment of silence, Napoleon began to speak. He said that the safety of the Empire demanded a momentous resolution, and that he counted on all of her courage and devotion to consent to a step upon which he himself, with the greatest reluctance, had decided — the dissolution of their marriage. Joséphine made no reply. She burst into tears, and then fell, apparently in a dead faint, upon the floor.

Greatly agitated, the Emperor opened the door of the salon, and called M. de Bausset, who was on duty that evening. After closing the door, Napoleon asked the prefect if he was strong enough to lift the Empress,

and carry her by the interior staircase to her apartment on the ground floor. Bausset, a large, stout man, took Joséphine in his arms, and followed Napoleon, who led the way, holding a candle in his hand. When the staircase was reached, Bausset saw that it was too narrow for him to descend with such a burden. The Emperor thereupon called an attendant, gave him the candle, and told him to light the way. Then he relieved Bausset of the Empress' legs, allowing him to support her body. In this manner, the descent was begun, Napoleon walking backwards and Bausset following, supporting Joséphine with his arms around her waist and her head resting on his shoulder. Suddenly he heard her voice, whispering to him softly: "Take care! you hurt me; you are holding me too tight."

The descent was finished without other incidents, and Joséphine, still in a swoon, was placed upon a sofa, and her maids called. The Emperor then left her in their care, and withdrew from the room, with his eyes filled with tears, and every sign of the deepest agitation. It would be difficult to believe this little episode of the stairway if the story were not related by such a devoted servant of the Empress as M. de Bausset.

If there is anything certain in this world, it is that Napoleon from the first always loved Joséphine with a devotion which far exceeded her attachment for him, and that he continued to love her until his life's end. Yet History will never forgive him for finally allowing his duty to the Empire to overcome his affections. It is easy to condemn his action as heartless, or as dictated by ambition, but nothing is gained by calling

names. If it were not for the fantastic connection which has been imagined between the fortunes of Napoleon and the "guiding star of his life," we should not have heard so much in condemnation of his divorce, which certainly was dictated by the most powerful reasons of State. The case is not altered by the fact that his second marriage was a dismal failure; or, as he himself once expressed it, that the Austrian alliance was "an abyss covered with flowers." It is a striking instance of the shortness of human foresight that a step taken to assure the safety of the Empire was to be the principal cause of its fall.

In his trouble, after this trying scene with Joséphine, Napoleon opened up his heart to Bausset. In a voice broken by emotion he said: "The interests of France and of my dynasty have forced my heart; the divorce has become for me a rigorous duty. . . . I am all the more afflicted by the scene which I have just had with Joséphine because for three days she must have known through Hortense the unfortunate obligation which condemns me to seek a separation from her. . . . I pity her from the bottom of my heart; I thought that she had more character, and I was not prepared for the manifestation of her grief." After each sentence he paused to catch his breath, and displayed every sign of the most poignant emotion.

Then he sent for his personal physician, Corvisart; also for Hortense, Fouché, and Cambacérès. Before ascending to his own apartment, he went again to see Joséphine, whom he found calm and more resigned. He received the two ministers on their arrival, and afterwards had a long talk with Hortense.

The interview with the Queen was very painful. He began in a tone of simulated harshness:

" My decision is made," he said. " Neither tears nor cries will affect a resolution which has become unavoidable, a resolution absolutely necessary for the safety of the Empire."

" Sire," replied Hortense, " you will have neither tears nor cries. The Empress will not fail to submit to your wishes, and to descend from the throne, as she mounted it, by your will. Her children, content to renounce the grandeurs which have not made them happy, will willingly consecrate their lives to consoling the best and most tender of mothers."

" That cannot be," cried Napoleon, much moved by her words. " Such an action would raise the suspicion of a veiled misunderstanding, either on your part towards me, or on my part towards your mother and her family."

" In our exile," continued Hortense, " we shall never forget all that we owe to the Emperor."

" Ah! you will abandon me? " cried the Emperor, bursting into tears. " You, you, to whom I have been a father! No, you cannot do that! You will remain with me; the future of your children demands it. . . . No matter how great for us all is this cruel sacrifice, it must be carried out with the dignity imposed by circumstances."

The Emperor then outlined to Hortense his plans for Joséphine's future: palaces, châteaux, a magnificent income, the first rank after the reigning Empress. Everything possible was to be done to dissemble the change in her situation which would result from the

divorce. He then sent Hortense to see her mother and try to reconcile her.

The night which followed was one of the saddest in the life of Napoleon. Several times he arose and descended to inform himself personally of the condition of Joséphine. He did not sleep at all.

In the morning, when Mlle. Avrillon came, Joséphine called to her to approach the bed, and told her confidentially what had occurred. Seeing her air of consternation, Joséphine at once began to excuse the Emperor, saying: "He is in despair over our separation; he also cried, and assured me that it was the greatest sacrifice he could make for France. Yes, I well know that he must have an heir for his glory, a child who will consolidate his Empire. . . . He has told Hortense that he will always be the same for her and Eugène, and that he will often come to me in my retreat. . . . He has sworn that he will never compel me to leave France. He allows me to live at Malmaison. . . . He wishes me always to enjoy a position of consideration, and that I shall have an adequate income."

At that time there were no daily papers such as we have to-day, all eager for news; but the journals would not have ventured to publish the reports even if rumors of the coming event had leaked out. The secret seems to have been well kept by the few persons who knew it, and the Empress appeared as usual at several functions during the first two weeks of December. At the fêtes of this trying fortnight Napoleon was in public even more attentive to Joséphine than usual.

On the first day of December the Emperor and Empress went to Malmaison where a fête was given in

honor of the King of Saxony, at which were present the kings of Naples, Holland and Würtemberg, who arrived in Paris that day.

An elaborate program had been arranged, to celebrate the double anniversay of the Coronation and the victory of Austerlitz, as well as the conclusion of the Treaty of Vienna. The festivals were to be prolonged over several days. On the third, in the morning, there was a *Te Deum* at Notre-Dame; in the afternoon, the formal opening of the Corps Législatif; and in the evening, a State dinner at the Tuileries. On the fourth, in the morning there was a grand review in the court of the Tuileries, and in the evening the Emperor and Empress were present at a fête given at the Hôtel-de-Ville in honor of the Coronation. For this occasion the court of the Hôtel-de-Ville had been transformed into an enormous ball-room. The kings and queens danced in the quadrille d'honneur, after which the Emperor traversed the room, and addressed a few courteous words to many of the ladies present.

On the seventh, there was a spectacle at the Tuileries, but this time the Empress did not appear. It was given out that she was suffering from a *migraine:* poor Joséphine had gone to the limits of her endurance. She was also absent from the side of the Emperor, when on the eighth he received in the Throne Room a deputation of the Corps Législatif. In his reply to the address the Emperor used a phrase which seemed to presage the coming event: "We shall always know how, my family and myself, to sacrifice even our dearest affections to the interests and the welfare of this great nation."

On the eleventh, Joséphine appeared in public with Napoleon for the last time, at a fête given at the château of Grosbois by Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neuchâtel et de Wagram. This fine residence had belonged before the Revolution to the Comte de Provence, and later to Barras and Moreau. The kings and princes then in Paris, and a large part of the Court, were present. There was a hunt during the day, followed in the evening by a dinner, a spectacle and a ball.

The evening was marred by a most unfortunate *contretemps*. Berthier had arranged to entertain his guests with a comedy played by Brunet, one of the most popular actors of the day. Brunet, who was entirely ignorant of the coming event, chose from his répertoire a very droll little play which turned on the subject of divorce. Imagine the embarrassment, the stupefaction of poor Berthier, and the feelings of Napoleon and Joséphine, when the actor announced his intention of securing a divorce " pour avoir des ancêtres " (to have ancestors); followed by a change of mind, with the sage remark: " I know what my wife is, I do not know what the one I take may be like."

This scene of comedy, in the drama of divorce, was worthy of the pen of a Shakespeare. " Truth is stranger than fiction."

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1809

THE DIVORCE

Eugène Reaches Paris — His Difficult Position — He Arranges a Final Conference — Refuses the Crown of Italy — The Family Council at the Tuileries — Address of the Emperor — Joséphine's Touching Reply — Eugène's Address to the Senate — Napoleon Leaves for the Trianon — Joséphine's Departure from the Tuileries — Annulment of the Religious Marriage — The Legend of Joséphine

PRINCE EUGENE arrived in Paris on the 8 December. At the time he left Milan he was still ignorant of the reasons for his summons, but Hortense, by order of the Emperor, met him at Nemours, a few miles south of Fontainebleau, and broke the sad news. Joséphine had looked forward to his arrival, with the hope that he might turn the Emperor from his purpose, even at the last moment; but this illusion was soon dissipated.

The position of Eugène was very difficult. He was devoted to his mother, but he owed everything to the Emperor. It was not easy to reconcile his feeling of filial tenderness, with the respect and the gratitude which bound him to Napoleon. At his first interview he saw that the divorce was no longer an open question, and that it would be useless for him to raise any objections. He demanded the permission of the Emperor to retire to private life, saying that he could no

longer hold the office of viceroy when his mother had ceased to be empress. To which the Emperor replied: " Do you not realize how imperious are the reasons which force me to take this step? If Heaven grants me the object of my dearest hopes, the son so necessary to me, who will take my place by his side when I am absent? Who will be to him a father, if I die? Who will bring him up? Who will make a man of him? "

In order to settle the matter definitely, without any further delay, Eugène asked the Emperor to consent to a meeting with Joséphine, where, in his presence, they could have a final explanation. Napoleon agreed, and the conference was held that same evening.

The Emperor stated that the divorce was an absolute necessity for the stability of the Empire. Joséphine in turn said that this consideration should outweigh any others, and that she was ready to make this sacrifice for her country. Then she added, bursting into tears: " As soon as we are separated, my children will be forgotten. Make Eugène King of Italy."

Eugène interrupted her with the indignant words: " No! I pray you, leave me out of the question. Your son does not wish for a crown, which would be the price of your separation. If you bow to the wishes of the Emperor, it is of you alone that he must think." Napoleon was touched. " That is Eugène's true heart," he said. " He does well to trust to my affection."

Friday, the 15 December 1809, was the day chosen by the Emperor for the dissolution of his civil marriage. The Family Council assembled at nine o'clock in the evening at the Tuileries in the salon of the Emperor, on the first floor, between the Throne Room and the

Gallery of Diana. All the members of the family were present except Joseph, who was in Spain, Lucien, who was still in disgrace, and Élisa, who was expecting a child. But Madame Mère, Louis, Jérôme and his wife, Pauline, Caroline and her husband, Murat, were there, together with Eugène and his sister as representatives of the Beauharnais. Cambacérès, the arch-chancellor, and Regnault, secretary of state, were also present.

The palace was brilliantly illuminated, as on days of fête, and the whole Imperial family was in full Court dress. Joséphine wore a perfectly plain white robe, with no jewels. Although very pale, she seemed calmer than either Eugène or Hortense, who were much agitated. Around the room were arranged the seats for the members of the family, in due order of precedence: armchairs for the Emperor, Empress, and Madame Mère; chairs for the kings and queens; and stools for the others.

When all had taken their places, the Emperor arose, and began to read his address:

" The policy of my monarchy, the interests and the needs of my people, which have constantly guided my actions, demand that after myself, I leave to children, heirs of my love for my people, this throne upon which Providence has placed me. Nevertheless, for several years past, I have lost the hope of having children of my marriage with my well-loved spouse the Empress Joséphine. It is this which has led me to sacrifice the dearest affection of my heart, to listen only to the welfare of the State, and to desire the dissolution of our marriage.

" Arrived at the age of forty years, I can conceive

the hope of living long enough to bring up in my spirit and my thought the children whom it may please Providence to give me. God knows how much such a resolution has cost my heart; but there is no sacrifice above my courage, when it is proved to me that it is for the benefit of France."

The address of the Emperor had been carefully prepared and written out in advance, but departing now from the text he continued:

" Far from ever having had to complain, I can, on the contrary, only rejoice over the affection and tenderness of my well-loved spouse. She has graced fifteen years of my life, and the memory of this will remain ever stamped upon my heart. She was crowned by my hand; I desire that she shall keep the rank and title of crowned Empress, but above all that she shall never doubt my feelings, and that she shall have me always as her best and dearest friend."

It was now the turn of Joséphine to speak. She also had modified the terms of the declaration prepared for her, which by its excess of adulation would have taken, from her lips, a tone of irony. The words which she used were well chosen, and apparently her own, as they were written in her clear hand upon her usual paper. Once more she had given proof of that tact which was one of her graces and her charms. But she had only read a few sentences when her voice became choked with tears, and she handed the paper to Regnault, who continued the discourse:

" With the permission of our august and dear spouse, I declare that, since I have no hope of bearing children, who can satisfy the requirements of his policy

and the interests of France, it is my pleasure to give him the greatest proof of attachment and devotion which was ever given on earth. I owe all to his bounty; it was his hand which crowned me, and seated me on this throne. I have received nothing but proofs of affection and love from the French people. I am recognizing all this, I believe, in consenting to the dissolution of a marriage which is now an obstacle to the welfare of France, and deprives her of the good fortune of being ruled one day by the descendants of a great man, plainly raised up by Providence, to remove the ill-effects of a terrible Revolution, and to set up again the altar, the throne, and the social order. But the dissolution of my marriage will make no change in the sentiments of my heart. The Emperor will always have in me his best friend. I know how much this act, which is made necessary by his policy and by such great interests, has wounded his heart; but we shall win glory, both of us, by the sacrifice which we have made in the interests of our country."

Not only her children, Eugène and Hortense, but even the hostile Bonapartes, were moved by these eloquent and touching words. The meeting ended with the signature by each member of the Imperial family of the document prepared by Cambacérès. The Emperor then conducted Joséphine to her apartment, where he left her after a tender embrace.

But the night was not to end for Napoleon without one more painful scene. He had hardly retired when the door opened and Joséphine appeared. She threw herself into his arms, and Napoleon pressed her to his heart, saying: "Come, my good Joséphine, be more

reasonable. Courage, courage, I shall always be thy friend."

The following day Joséphine was to leave the Tuileries forever. After a sleepless night she was occupied from early morning with her preparations for departure. Her children were with her, but Eugène was obliged to leave her at eleven o'clock for the meeting of the Senate, where the decree was to be passed, annulling the imperial marriage. It was the first appearance of the Viceroy in his quality of senator. After taking his oath of office, he spoke in support of the resolution offered by Comte Regnault, saying: "I think that it is my duty, under the present circumstances, to make plain the sentiments by which my family is animated. My mother, my sister, and myself, we owe everything to the Emperor. To us he has been a real father. At all times he will find in us, devoted children, and submissive subjects. It is important for the welfare of France that the founder of this fourth dynasty shall grow old surrounded by direct heirs who shall be our guarantee, as a pledge of the country's glory. When my mother was crowned before the whole nation by the hands of her august spouse, she contracted the obligation to sacrifice all her affections to the interests of France. She has filled this first of her duties with courage, nobility and dignity."

Of the eighty-seven senators present, all but seven voted in favor of the decree, with four blank bulletins. Attention was called to the fact, often forgotten, that no less than thirteen of the predecessors of Napoleon upon the throne of France had been constrained to dissolve their marriage bonds, and among them four

of the monarchs the most admired and loved by the people: Charlemagne, Philip-Augustus, Louis the Twelfth, and Henry the Fourth.

The first act of the program, the annulment of the civil marriage, had been carried out, and no obstacle had been encountered. All of the actors had filled their rôles better than any one could have expected. There remained the religious marriage to dissolve, a very necessary step if the Emperor were to espouse a Catholic princess.

While the chamber of the Senate was still echoing with the adulations of the address unanimously voted to her by the members, the Empress was leaving the Tuileries. It had been arranged that during the course of the day Joséphine should go to Malmaison, which in the future was to be her principal residence, while the Emperor was to depart for the Trianon. He was to leave first, at four o'clock in the afternoon. When his carriage was announced, he took his hat, called to his secretary, Méneval, to follow him, and rapidly descended the private staircase which led to the apartment of Joséphine in the *rez-de-chaussée*. On the entrance of the Emperor, Joséphine, who was awaiting him alone, threw herself into his arms, and Napoleon tenderly embraced her. Then she fainted, and Méneval rang for her attendants. As soon as Napoleon saw that she was recovering consciousness, to avoid a prolongation of the painful scene, he took his departure. Enjoining upon his secretary not to leave the Empress, he passed through the salons on the ground floor to the court, and entered his carriage which bore him away to Versailles.

When Joséphine perceived that the Emperor had left, she seized the hands of M. de Méneval, and exclaimed: "Tell the Emperor not to forget me. Assure him of my undying affection. Promise me to send me news of him as soon as you arrive at the Trianon, and see that he writes me."

It was now the turn of Joséphine to leave. All the members of the palace household had gathered in the vestibule to salute the Empress as she departed. She was loved and regretted by all, and many eyes were filled with tears. To her they had always gone in their troubles, when there was a favor to ask, or a fault to be pardoned. There was not one who did not regard the good Empress as a guardian angel.

For the last time, Joséphine enters her carriage at the door of the Tuileries, and leaves this abode of ten years, where she has spent so many happy days, and also endured so many hours of anguish.

Cambacérès, who had the matter in charge, found great and unexpected difficulties in procuring the annulment of the religious marriage, and a whole month passed before the decree was published. The ground taken was that the Emperor had been constrained, that his consent had been neither voluntary nor free, and that under the circumstances the marriage was null and void. The facts could not be disputed, but matrimonial cases of sovereigns were by usage reserved for the Pope: it was before the Supreme Pontiff that the cases of Louis the Twelfth and Henry the Fourth had been taken. Now the domains of the Church had been annexed to the Empire, and Napoleon had been ex-

communicated by the Pope, who was at present his prisoner. Other means must therefore be sought for the dissolution of the marriage. The various steps are related in detail by M. Masson, to whom the curious reader is referred. Suffice it here to state that on the 14 January 1810 the *Moniteur* announced to France and to the entire world the rupture of the spiritual bond which united His Majesty the Emperor Napoleon and Her Majesty the Empress Joséphine.

For several weeks the divorce was naturally the one topic of discussion in Paris. Joséphine was an object of universal sympathy, and on descending from the throne, as if she were already dead, she was accorded all the virtues.

In the Army, the divorce was generally regretted. With the soldiers she had long been legendary, and many of the officers also attributed to her a beneficent effect upon the fortunes of Napoleon. When the hour of defeat sounded, during the terrible retreat from Moscow, more than one of the old *grognards* were heard to exclaim: "The Little Corporal should never have given up *la vieille* (*the old woman*); she brought good fortune to him and to us too." It is doubtful if Joséphine would have been entirely pleased with this compliment if she had overheard it.

Beugnot, in his *Mémoires*, also speaks of the general belief that Joséphine brought good luck to her husband. "I repeated it, and I even almost believed it," he writes, "that Joséphine was the good fortune of the Emperor, and consequently of France, and that if she were ever separated from her husband, she would carry that fortune with her."

Joséphine, with her Creole tendency to superstition, probably believed it, and certainly tried to make Napoleon believe it. Later on, when overcome by reverses and betrayals, he was heard to say: "She was right: our separation has brought me misfortune."

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

1809–1810

JOSEPHINE AT MALMAISON

Dowry of the Empress — Napoleon's Liberality — Her Debts Paid — The First Days at Malmaison — Napoleon's Visits and Letters — Christmas Dinner at Trianon — Joséphine Tires of the Country — Her Interest in the Austrian Marriage — Napoleon Arranges for Her Return to Paris — Her Arrival at the Élysée Palace.

IN fixing the dowry of Joséphine the Emperor had not been content with the amount of two million francs granted her under the Constitution of the Empire, from the State Treasury. By decree, he assured her from the Crown Treasury an additional allowance of one million francs; by a second decree he gave her for life the use of the Palais de l'Élysée; and by a third sovereign act, he renounced in her favor all his title and interest in Malmaison.

By these acts the Emperor had more than redeemed his promise to assure her future. In Paris, Joséphine had for her residence the most sumptuous and the most attractive of the imperial palaces, and at the gates of the capital a château of her own choice, furnished to suit her own taste. So far from being a drain on her resources, the woods and lands of Malmaison in 1809 brought in a net revenue which exceeded by fifty per cent. the cost of its upkeep. Aside from her magnificent allowance of three millions, and her valuable collection of jewels, however, Joséphine had no private fortune.

Napoleon knew by experience that the Empress must have some debts, and he now demanded a detailed statement of the amounts. She was forced to admit that these had accumulated since the last previous liquidation three years before, and now reached a total of nearly two millions. After a careful examination of the accounts, the amount was reduced by a round half million, and the balance was paid by the Emperor with the understanding that one-half the sum should be deducted from her allowance for each of the two following years. By this arrangement the income of the Empress was reduced to a little more than two millions for the first two years. Having paid her debts, and provided her with an ample allowance, Napoleon now arranged a careful budget for Joséphine's expenses in the future, but his past experience with her should have taught him how useless it was to try to curb her mania for spending.

Joséphine arrived at Malmaison after the close of the short December day, under a cold, penetrating rain. She was accompanied by Eugène and Hortense, who did their best to cheer and console their mother in her new situation. The disposition shown by some members of her household to desert her was checked by the Emperor, who gave express orders that they were all to continue their services until the end of the year.

The first day at Malmaison was sad and depressing. The rain continued to fall without ceasing. In the morning Joséphine was constantly in tears provoked by the sight of "the places where she had lived so long with the Emperor." At an early hour Napoleon

sent one of his officers from the Trianon in search of news. " He tells me," Napoleon writes, " that since you are at Malmaison your courage has failed you. Nevertheless, the place is full of souvenirs of our affections which can never change, at least on my part. I am very anxious to see you, but I must be sure that you are strong and not weak. I am also a little weak myself, and that pains me much."

At the Trianon the Emperor was surrounded by Pauline and her friends, who did their best to amuse him and distract his thoughts. It was impossible to walk, or drive, or hunt in the rain. The only recourse was a game of cards, of which Napoleon soon tired. He ordered his carriage and drove rapidly to the Tuileries. On his way back in the afternoon he stopped to visit Joséphine at Malmaison. Between the showers they walked in the park together as of old, but he only shook her hand when he came and went, and did not kiss her. On his return to the Trianon he wrote her:

8 P.M. (17) December 1809

Mon amie, I found you to-day weaker than you should have been. You have shown courage, and you must find enough to sustain you. You must not allow yourself to lapse into a fatal melancholy; you must become content, and above all guard your health, which is so precious to me. If you are attached to me and if you love me you must bear yourself with strength and become happy. You cannot doubt my constant and tender friendship, and you little know all my regard for you if you imagine that I can be happy if you are not, and contented if you are not tranquil. Adieu, mon amie, sleep well, think that I wish it.

NAPOLEON

The second day at Malmaison passed in much the same way. The rain continued, with a high wind, and it was impossible for Joséphine to seek distraction by walking in the park. Eugène's efforts to cheer her up with a forced gaiety were of no avail. After déjeuner there were many callers. With every new visitor who came to pay his respects, or express his regrets, there was a new flood of tears. But in her grief Joséphine displays her usual tact: "Not a word *de trop,* not a harsh complaint, falls from her lips; she is really as sweet as an angel."

At Paris, the reports of her attitude produced an excellent effect. Every one pitied her, and admired her courage and resignation.

On the eighteenth the Emperor, in the rain, hunted in the forest of Saint-Germain, and sent no less than three times to demand news of Joséphine. The following day, before departing for the hunt, he sent Savary to see the Empress. Not content with writing, and receiving her letters, he wished to have the report of a person in whom he had entire confidence. On his return he found a letter from Joséphine, and immediately wrote her:

7 P.M. (19 December 1809)

I have your letter, mon amie. Savary tells me that you are constantly crying. That is not right. I hope that you have been able to take a walk to-day. I have sent you some of my bag. I will come to see you when you assure me that you are reasonable and that your courage has got the upper hand. To-morrow I have the ministers here all day. Adieu, mon amie. I, too, am melancholy to-day. I want to hear that you are satisfied and to learn of your self-possession. Sleep well. NAPOLEON

The following day the Emperor wanted to visit her, "but he is very busy, and a little indisposed." The weather also is "damp and unhealthy." But during the day the sun comes out, and at night he writes again: "As the day has been fine, I hope that you have been out to see your plants. I have only been out for a short time, at three o'clock this afternoon, to shoot some hares."

Joséphine had indeed been out for the first time. Madame de Rémusat, who had constituted herself Joséphine's moral and physical director, had persuaded the Empress to take some exercise, thinking that a little fatigue might repose her mind. As Monsieur Masson well remarks: If Joséphine had been willing to travel for a time, to go to Milan or Rome, she might little by little have lessened the pain of her downfall; but so near to Paris and the Trianon, at every moment the same feelings are renewed: a note or some attention from the Emperor, a face familiar at the Tuileries, a page, a servant, a soldier, — all furnish an occasion for a new outbreak. The Emperor himself was largely responsible for this state of affairs. Through pity for Joséphine, also from weakness on his own part, he had not commanded her to go away, and in thus prolonging the agony of the separation he was suffering as much as the Empress from being "so near and yet so far." Madame de Rémusat, taking advantage of the fact that her husband was on duty at Trianon, wrote him to "hint to the Emperor that he should write the Empress in such a manner as to encourage her; and not in the evening, for his letters give her nights of

anguish; also, to moderate in his letters, his expressions of regret and grief."

The Emperor evidently took this advice in good part, for his future letters were more manly. On the 23 December he wrote: "I should have come to see you to-day, but for the arrival of the King of Bavaria. I hope to see you to-morrow and to find you gay and self-possessed." He visited her as promised, but, although affectionate and tender in his manner, he did not kiss Joséphine, and was not alone with her a moment.

The following day was Christmas, and he invited Joséphine and Hortense to visit him at Trianon. He kept them for dinner, and, according to Eugène, who was also present, "he was very good and very amiable to her," and she seemed to feel much better.

The next morning the Emperor wrote: "I retired last night as soon as you left. I want to know that you are gay. I will come to see you during the week. I have received your letters which I will read in my carriage." In fact he was returning to the Tuileries, after an absence of ten days, and this was another trial for him and for Joséphine. The day after his arrival he writes: "I was much bored at seeing the Tuileries again; this large palace seemed empty to me, and I find myself very lonesome in it." The same evening he writes again: "I much desire to go to Malmaison, but you must be strong and calm." He adds: *"I am going to dine all alone."*

In other letters written during the last week in December the Emperor promises Joséphine to come to see

her " to-morrow." But one day he is retained by the Council until eight o'clock, at which hour he dines alone. The next day, Sunday, there is a grand review of the Old Guard in the court of the Tuileries, and he is unable to come " after Mass," as he had proposed.

Napoleon begins to find Malmaison too far away for frequent visits in mid-winter, and wearied of his lonely dinners he conceives the idea of having her nearer him in Paris. But there is no abode vacant. He had given her the Élysée for a town house, but after the departure of the King of Saxony, the Murats had at once taken possession, on the 17 December. Their stay was supposed to be only temporary, but Caroline found the palace so comfortable, and was so delighted to keep Joséphine out, that she planned to prolong her occupancy as much as possible, and sent out invitations for a masked ball and other entertainments. However, the palace was formally promised Joséphine for the first week in January, and she took good care to have the promise renewed by the Emperor when he came, although ill, to wish her a Happy New Year.

But Joséphine wished not only to move to the Élysée, but to assure her continued occupancy of the palace, and she now made a move which has often puzzled her biographers. On the first day of January 1810 she sent an invitation to Madame de Metternich, the wife of the former Austrian ambassador, to visit her at Malmaison. Much surprised at this summons, the lady came on the following day. In the salon she found Eugène, who seemed to expect her, and in a few minutes Hortense entered. Madame de Metternich was almost stupefied when Hortense greeted her with the

words: "You know, Madame, that we are all Austrians at heart, but you would never imagine that my mother has had the courage to advise the Emperor to ask for the hand of your Archduchess."

Before Madame de Metternich had time to recover from her astonishment, Joséphine herself appeared. "I have a project," she said, "which occupies me exclusively, the success of which alone gives me hope that the sacrifice I have just made will not be entirely lost. This is that the Emperor shall marry your Archduchess. I spoke of the matter to him yesterday, and he replied that his decision was not yet entirely made; but I am certain that it would be if he were sure of being accepted by you."

Madame de Metternich replied that, personally, she should regard such an alliance as a great piece of good fortune; but, with the thought of Marie-Antoinette in her mind, she could not refrain from adding that it might be painful for an Austrian archduchess to come to reside in France.

Joséphine continued: "We must endeavor to arrange all this. You must make your Emperor see that his ruin and that of his country are certain if he does not consent, and that it is the only means of preventing the Emperor from creating a schism with the Holy See." Joséphine concluded by saying that the Emperor was coming to breakfast with her, and that she would again speak to him on the subject.

At that time Joséphine had no connections with the Russian Court, and no acquaintance with the Czar Alexander, who later was so devoted to her. She felt that, on that side, she had nothing to hope and every-

thing to fear. But her feeling for Austria was entirely different. Since the time of her first visit to Italy in 1796 she had been on very friendly terms with the Archduke Ferdinand, the brother of the Emperor. After the Peace of Campo-Formio, she had received from the Emperor himself handsome presents, in recognition of the "friendly feelings which animated her." She had always been on confidential terms also with Metternich. She felt sure, therefore, that her Austrian connections would never fail her. This is the explanation of what would seem otherwise a very strange move on her part.

Metternich, who had recently been recalled to Vienna, to take the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, wrote his wife at Paris, in reply to her communication regarding Joséphine's project: "This Princesse has recently given proofs of a force of character which must greatly increase the feeling of veneration with which not only France but all Europe has long regarded her."

In the meantime the Emperor does not fail in his attentions to his former wife. Every day that he cannot visit her, he sends her a letter. He is interested in all her acts; he is rejoiced if she takes a walk or is diverted in any way. The first week in January, after a long call, the previous day, he writes:

Sunday, 8 P.M. (7 January 1810)

It gave me very great pleasure to see you yesterday; I realize what a charm your company has for me. I have worked to-day with Estève. I have granted 100,000 francs for 1810 for the extraordinary expenses of Malmaison. You can therefore plant as much as you please; you will employ

this sum as you wish. I have charged Estève to remit 200,000 francs also as soon as the contract for the Julien house is closed. I have ordered that your set of rubies be settled for as soon as they are appraised by the administration, as I do not wish any robbery by the jewelers. All that costs me 400,000 francs.

I have ordered that the million due you from the civil list for 1810 shall be held at the disposal of your man of affairs, to pay your debts.

You should find in the *armoire* at Malmaison 5 to 600,000 francs; you can take them to pay for your silver and linen.

I have commanded for you a very handsome set of porcelain; they will take your orders, that it may be very fine.

NAPOLEON

During the first month that Joséphine was at Malmaison the Emperor wrote her every day or two, and went to see her several times a week. After that, both his letters and his calls became more and more infrequent. He was gradually becoming accustomed to his lonely dinners, and his solitary nights. Joséphine, for her part, was daily getting more and more bored at Malmaison, and anxious to return to Paris. She had Napoleon's promise, and she did not hesitate to remind him of it. On the 28 January he writes: "I have had your belongings here arranged, and given orders to take everything to the Élysée." Two days later he says: "I shall be pleased to know that you are at the Élysée, and very happy to see you oftener, for you know how much I love you."

But Joséphine began to have her doubts. There were rumors of exile, of a prohibition of her residence in Paris. She took alarm and sent Eugène to see the Em-

peror. Napoleon defended himself in two letters, written probably on the 6 and 10 February:

Tuesday Noon (6 February) 1810

I learn that you are worried; that is all wrong. You are without confidence in me, and are affected by all the reports which are noised around; this shows your ignorance of me, Joséphine. I am vexed with you, and if I do not learn that you are gay and contented, I shall go and scold you well.

Adieu, mon amie. NAPOLEON

Saturday 6 P.M (10 February) 1810

I have told Eugène that you preferred to listen to the gossip of a great city rather than what I said to you; that people should not be permitted to annoy you with idle tales.

I have had your effects transported to the Élysée. You shall come to Paris very soon; but be calm and contented, and have entire confidence in me.

NAPOLEON

Monsieur Masson, who places the date of this last letter a week earlier, says, "the same evening Joséphine was installed [at the Élysée], and the Emperor came immediately to see her." But this seems to be an error. In the collection of Queen Hortense we find the following letter (No. 209):

To the Empress, at Malmaison

Sunday, 9 o'clock (? 11 February) 1810

Mon amie, I was very glad to see you day before yesterday.

I hope to go to Malmaison during the week.

I have had your affairs here arranged and ordered everything taken to the Élysée-Napoléon.

I pray you to keep well.

Adieu, mon amie.

NAPOLEON

On Tuesday the 20 February, the Emperor, after hunting in the woods of Versailles, attended a fête given by Marshal Bessières at Grignon. From there he went to Rambouillet, and returned to Paris at six o'clock on the evening of Friday the 23 February. It was apparently just prior to this absence that Joséphine moved to Paris, as will appear from the two following letters:

To the Empress, at the Élysée-Napoléon

19 February 1810

Mon amie, I have received your letter. I wish to see you, but your reflections may be correct. There are perhaps some objections to our finding ourselves under the same roof during the first year. However, the country place of Bessières is too distant to be able to return; besides, I have a slight cold, and am not sure to go there.

Adieu, mon amie.

NAPOLEON

Friday, 6 P.M (23 February) 1810

Savary has handed me your letter on my arrival; I notice with regret that you are sad; I am glad that you saw no signs of the fire.

I had fine weather at Rambouillet.

Hortense tells me that you had planned to come to dine

with Bessières, and return to Paris to sleep. I regret that you were not able to carry out your project.

Adieu, mon amie; be gay; think that this is the way to please me.

NAPOLEON

In the collection of Queen Hortense the earlier letters of Napoleon to Joséphine, almost without exception, are fully dated; but those written after the divorce usually give only the day of the week. This makes the task of arrangement in many cases very difficult. In this instance, however, it is manifest that the letter dated "19 February," which the editors place last, was written before the departure of the Emperor for Rambouillet, and the letter dated "Friday 6 P.M." was written after his return. It is also evident that Joséphine did not move to Paris until after the middle of February.

CHAPTER THIRTY

1810

THE CHATEAU OF NAVARRE

Napoleon's Preference for a Russian Alliance — The Matter Discussed in Conference — The Archduchess Marie-Louise Favored — The Marriage Arranged — The New Empress Arrives at Paris — Joséphine Goes to Malmaison — The Emperor Gives Her Navarre — She Takes Possession of the Château — Its Dilapidated Condition — Joséphine's Letter to Hortense — The Empress Worried Over the Paris Gossip — Her Letter to Napoleon and His Reply — The Emperor Agrees to All Her Plans — Joséphine Returns to Malmaison

FROM the time that the divorce of Joséphine was first officially discussed, at the Erfurt conference in the autumn of 1808, Napoleon's preference seems to have been for an alliance with the imperial family of Russia. The replies of the Czar to the overtures of Talleyrand at that time had been equally vague and discreet; but a week after his return home his elder sister Catharine had been affianced to the heir of the Duchy of Oldenburg.

During the following year the time of the Emperor was taken up with the campaigns in Spain and Austria, and the matter remained in abeyance. But his thoughts still turned to Russia, and on the 22 November 1809, a week before the formal notification to Joséphine, he instructed Champagny, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to send a despatch to Caulaincourt, the French am-

bassador at St. Petersburg, directing him to ask the Czar to state frankly whether he would consider favorably an alliance between the Emperor and his younger sister, Anne.

At that time it took two weeks for a courier to go from Paris to Saint Petersburg, and a month later no reply had yet been received from Russia. Another month passed, and Napoleon's patience was exhausted. After Mass, on Sunday the 28 January 1810, the Emperor called a meeting of the principal dignitaries of the Empire, to discuss the respective advantages and disadvantages of a matrimonial alliance with Austria, Russia or Saxony. Prince Eugène, Talleyrand, Champagny, Berthier, and Maret declared for the Archduchess Marie-Louise; Murat and Cambacérès, for the Grand Duchess Anne; while only Lebrun favored the daughter of the King of Saxony. Napoleon took no part in the discussion, and gave no indication of his preference.

Finally, on the 6 February, a despatch was received from Caulaincourt. He stated that he had not yet succeeded in obtaining a definite answer from the Czar, but added that Anne, who was only fifteen, was not yet of an age to marry, and furthermore that she was not willing to change her religion. Napoleon hesitated no longer. He immediately sent a messenger to inquire of the Austrian ambassador, Prince de Schwarzenberg, whether the marriage contract with the Archduchess Marie-Louise could be signed the next day!

The contract, which was accordingly signed as proposed, was an almost exact copy of that of Marie-Antoinette, forty years before. The marriage by proc-

uration was celebrated at Vienna on the 11 March, the Archduke Charles representing the Emperor Napoleon. On the 23 March Marie-Louise crossed the Rhine at Strasbourg, and four days later reached Compiègne where Napoleon had been awaiting her arrival for a week.

The Court left Compiègne on the 30 March and arrived at Saint-Cloud the same evening. Here the civil marriage was celebrated on Sunday, the first of April. The religious ceremony was performed in Paris the following day by Cardinal Fesch, and took place in the Salon Carré of the Louvre, which had been transformed into a chapel for the occasion.

In the meantime, Joséphine at the Élysée was finding her life in Paris as monotonous as it had been at Malmaison. The capital had never been so gay. Every night there were dinners, balls, suppers; but the Empress Joséphine was not present. The Emperor attended the opera, the theatres: he even gave, in the former apartments of the Empress at the Tuileries, a performance by the troupe of the Théâtre-Feydeau. There were balls given by Schwarzenberg, Talleyrand, Pauline, Berthier, Cambacérès; but in the midst of all these gaieties, Joséphine passed her evenings quietly at home.

The Emperor had completely changed his habitudes, and seemed to be in training for his life with a young wife. In place of the former tragedies, he demanded comedies to amuse him. He hunted in the Bois de Boulogne, at Saint-Germain, and at Satory. From time to time he paid a brief visit to Joséphine, but his letters had almost entirely ceased. In the centre of Paris,

Joséphine felt as though she were marooned on a desert island.

After passing only a few weeks at the Élysée, on the 9 March Joséphine returned to Malmaison. It is not definitely known whether she tired of her isolation in the capital, or whether she received a delicate hint that her absence would be appreciated during the coming fêtes in honor of the arrival of the new Empress.

The very day that the marriage contract with Marie-Louise was signed, the Emperor had taken up the matter of finding a suitable country residence for Joséphine: one not too far from Paris, but at the same time more distant than Malmaison, which was almost at the gates of the city. His choice finally fell on the old château of Navarre, near Evreux, about seventy miles west of Paris. It will be recalled that this property had been assigned to the Prince of the Asturias in May 1808, as a part of the bargain for the Crown of Spain, but the agreement had never been carried out, and the following January, by a decree of the Emperor, the land of Navarre had been added to the domain of the State.

This château owed its name to Jeanne of France, Queen of Navarre, who about the middle of the fourteenth century had erected the building on the site of an old manor house. Three hundred years later the property was ceded by Louis the Fourteenth to the Duc de Bouillon in exchange for the sovereignty of Sedan, and remained in the possession of that family up to the time of the Revolution. By a curious coincidence, it was one of the cadet members of this same

family who built at Paris the hôtel which later became the palace of the Élysée. During the Revolution the property was confiscated, and had later been joined to the Crown lands, although the title was far from clear. It was also very doubtful whether the Emperor had the power now to alienate the property from the Crown domain, and present it to a private person. But after certain formalities, more or less legal, had been complied with, the Emperor directed Maret to prepare letters patent erecting the land of Navarre into a duchy, and conveyed the title and the revenues to Joséphine for her life. In a letter to the Empress at Malmaison, Napoleon tells her of this gift:

(Paris) 12 March 1810

Mon amie, I hope that you have been satisfied with what I have done for Navarre. You will have seen in this act a new proof of my desire to be agreeable to you.

Take possession of Navarre; you might go there the 25 March to pass the month of April.

Adieu, mon amie.

Napoleon

This letter of the Emperor was in effect an order, which admitted of no evasion. The date of her departure and the length of her exile were both fixed. The 19 March, the day of Saint-Joseph, was her fête, but it was very quietly celebrated this year. The following day Eugène was to arrive with his wife, whom she had not seen since their marriage at Munich four years before. They came to spend a week at Malmaison, and thus Joséphine found an excuse to defer her departure for a few days longer. She had already stayed

three days beyond the limit fixed by the Emperor; the new Empress was at Compiègne, and expected in Paris by the end of the week. It was time to start, and Joséphine went into her first exile.

Late in the afternoon of Thursday the 29 March, Joséphine made her triumphal entry into Évreux. She was received by the mayor, the prefect, and the authorities, with a band of music, and a guard of honor; the church bells were rung, and there were salvos of artillery. Joséphine did not stop in the city, but proceeded directly to Navarre, where she arrived at nightfall.

The first view of the château was very disappointing: it was a huge two-storied square block, surmounted by a dome upon which one of the original owners had intended to set up a statue of his uncle, the great Turenne. At the side of the château stood a smaller house. Both alike were dilapidated, draughty, and unfurnished, in spite of the fact that for two weeks past all of the laborers available at Évreux had worked "to make in haste the most necessary repairs." The unfinished and uncrowned dome, which gave a ludicrous appearance to the building, was irreverently termed the *marmite* by the Normands of the neighborhood.

The rooms were vast and chilly; the windows would not close; the roof leaked, and the chimneys smoked. The château's situation in a valley, while giving from the windows beautiful views of wooded hills in the summer, made it very damp for the rest of the year. On all sides there were large bodies of water, with cascades and fountains; and the park was planted with

magnificent trees, but at the end of March " the leaves are rare, and between the water which flows, the water which stagnates, and the water which falls, with, for companions, these black skeletons, denuded and oozing, it would require, to be pleased, a backing of gaiety which Joséphine did not bring with her."

A few days after her arrival Joséphine wrote Hortense, who was at Compiègne with the Court:

NAVARRE, 3 April 1810

I arrived here in good health, my dear Hortense, although somewhat tired from the journey. I was depressed by the greeting I received. The inhabitants of Évreux have displayed much enthusiasm over my arrival, but this appearance of a fête somewhat resembled the compliments of condolence. . . . The Emperor is happy; he deserves to be, and he will be more and more; this thought is a great consolation for me, and the only one which sustains my courage. Navarre will become a very fine residence, but it demands many repairs and expenditures. Absolutely everything needs to be done over. The château is not habitable. The persons whom I have brought with me have each only a small room, of which the door and the windows do not close. My lodging is also very small and ill-arranged, and the woodwork is in bad order. The park is magnificent; it is in a large valley between two hills planted with the most beautiful trees; but there is too much water, which makes the place damp and unhealthy; one should live at Navarre during the months of May, June, July, and the beginning of August. Then it is the most enchanting spot to be found anywhere. At the present season Malmaison would be preferable to me. . . . My life here is that of the country. I go out for a walk or a drive when it does not rain; in the evening I have a game of backgammon with the Bishop of Évreux, who is very agreeable in spite of his seventy-five years. The time passes slowly, but it

will seem shorter to me when you are here. I look for you impatiently. Your rooms are ready; they are not handsome; you will only camp out; but you know with what tenderness you will be received.

Adieu, my dear daughter, I embrace you.

If the Emperor asks you for news of me, tell him, what is true, that my only occupation is thinking of him.

JOSÉPHINE

In a letter to her husband at Compiègne, written early in April, Madame de Rémusat says:

There are many tales here (at Paris) regarding the Court and the life you lead there. In general all these inventions are unkind; they all tend to show the *hauteur* of the manners of the Empress and the brusqueness of her character. Then every one recalls *the other,* and that will make her position difficult. They say that she will only be Duchesse de Navarre; that she will be relegated to the Duchy of Berg; that Malmaison will be bought back from her; that our new sovereign has displayed a great aversion to seeing her so near, and in support of that assertion they cite words clearly invented, for it is impossible that they should have been repeated. I await your return to know the truth.

As Madame de Rémusat was a great friend of Joséphine these rumors undoubtedly reached her at Navarre, and increased her anxiety to return to Malmaison. The Emperor had not written her since his marriage, and she looked upon his silence as a proof of his intention to abandon her entirely. She feared to write him direct, but through Eugène asked permission to return to Malmaison. The reply being favorable, Joséphine wrote the letter which follows:

NAVARRE, 10 April 1810

SIRE

I have received through my son the assurance that Your Majesty consents to my return to Malmaison, and is willing to grant me the advances which I have asked for to render the château of Navarre habitable.

This double favor, Sire, goes far to drive away the great anxiety, and even fear, inspired by Your Majesty's long silence. I was afraid of being banished entirely from your remembrance. I see now that I am not. I am therefore less unhappy, and even as happy as it is possible for me to be henceforward. I shall go to Malmaison at the end of the month, since Your Majesty sees no objection to this. . . . My plan is to stay there for a very short time; I shall soon take my departure to go to the waters. But during my stay at Malmaison Your Majesty may be sure that I shall live there as if I were a thousand leagues away from Paris. I have made a great sacrifice, Sire, and every day I more appreciate its magnitude. This sacrifice, however, shall be all it ought to be; it shall be complete on my part. Your Majesty shall not be troubled in the midst of your happiness by any expression of my regrets. . . .

May I have always a little place in your remembrance, and a large place in your esteem and friendship. This will soften my grief, without compromising, it seems to me, that which is of the highest importance, the happiness of Your Majesty.

JOSÉPHINE

This letter does not seem to merit either the severe criticism of some of the biographers or the eulogy of others. Turquan declares it to be totally lacking in dignity, with its irritating reiteration of the sacrifices she had made, and its demand for money. On the other hand Saint-Amand considers it to be "an eloquent and simple expression of a true and noble sentiment, in

which humility and dignity are perfectly combined"; and Masson says: "In truth this letter is a masterpiece, in which is to be found everything to excite the memory of Napoleon, arouse his former affection, and awaken his pity."

The best comment on this letter, however, is to be found in the reply of the Emperor:

COMPIÈGNE, 21 April 1810

Mon amie, I am in receipt your letter of the 19 April; it is in bad form (*d'un mauvais style*). I am always the same; men like myself never change. I cannot imagine what Eugène told you. I have not written you because you have not written, and because I wished in every way to be agreeable to you.

I am glad to know that you are going to Malmaison, and that you will be contented. I shall be pleased to hear from you, and to respond. I shall not say more until you have had a chance to compare this letter with your own: after that I leave you to decide which is the better friend, you or myself.

Adieu, mon amie; take care of yourself, and be just, both to yourself and to me.

NAPOLEON

This letter is written with the old familiar *tutoiement,* so difficult to render into English, which is employed by Napoleon in all his letters to Joséphine. We think that the reader will agree that her letter showed bad form; was unwarranted in its assumptions, and that Napoleon, on this, as on many other occasions, proved himself the better friend.

Joséphine's reply merits quotation in full:

NAVARRE (no date)

A thousand, thousand loving thanks for not having forgotten me. My son has just brought me your letter. With what eagerness I read it, and yet I spent plenty of time in doing so, for there was not a word of it which did not make me weep; but these tears were very sweet! I have got back my heart entirely, and it will always be as it is now. Certain feelings are life itself, and can only finish with life.

I should be in despair if my letter of the nineteenth had displeased you. I do not remember its exact wording; but I know how painful was the feeling which dictated it — the sorrow of not hearing from you.

I wrote you at the time of my departure from Malmaison; and since then how many times have I not wished to write to you! But I knew the reason for your silence, and I feared to importune you by a letter. Yours has been a balm to me. Be happy, be as happy as you deserve, it is my whole heart which speaks to you. You have just given me my share of happiness, and a share which I appreciate to the full. Nothing to me can be worth so much as a proof of your remembrance.

Adieu, mon amie. I thank you as tenderly as I shall always love you.

JOSÉPHINE

This letter is very sweet and tender, but somehow it does not ring true. Masson says, if it is sincere it is *maladroite;* but if she is playing a rôle, knowing her partner as she does, is it not adroit in the highest degree?

In answer to her letter, Napoleon wrote briefly from Compiègne on the 28 April, encouraging her to go to the waters and assuring her once more of his unchanged feelings. He, too, had evidently heard of the rumors spoken of by Madame de Rémusat, for he said

in his letter: " Do not listen to the babble of Paris; they are idle, and far from knowing the truth." In fact there was not the slightest foundation for the reports.

Napoleon showed himself most willing to fall in with Joséphine's plans for the remainder of the year, and the following winter. She wished to go first to Malmaison, then at the end of May to some watering-place for three months. After that she proposed to proceed to the South of France, Florence, Rome and Naples; to spend the winter with Eugène in Milan, and return in the spring to Malmaison and Navarre.

The Emperor did not offer to meet the expenses of the repairs at Navarre, but agreed to advance the six hundred thousand francs left, after payment of her debts, out of her allowance from the Crown Treasury for 1810 and 1811; also that the one hundred thousand francs allowed her for extraordinary expenses at Malmaison should be diverted to Navarre.

The middle of May, Joséphine returned to Malmaison, then in all its spring glory. For the first time she is able to enjoy her hyacinths and tulips imported from Holland, for, as she once complained, " Bonaparte always summons me to him just at the moment they are in flower."

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

1810

AIX-LES-BAINS AND GENEVA

Joséphine's Court at Malmaison — Her Anxiety About Hortense — A Call from the Emperor — Joséphine Goes to Aix-les-Bains — Her Life There — A Visit from Eugène — The Emperor Announces the Abdication of Louis — Joséphine's Narrow Escape from Death — Arrival of Hortense — Joséphine's Tour of Switzerland — She is Upset by the Reports Regarding Marie-Louise — Advice of Madame de Rémusat — Joséphine's Return

THE last week in April 1810, Napoleon left Compiègne with Marie-Louise for a visit of five weeks to Belgium. Madame de La Tour du Pin, the wife of the French prefect at Brussels at that time, has given us in her *Recollections* a striking picture of the young Empress, whom she saw frequently while the Court was at Laeken. She says that Marie-Louise was insignificant, absolutely devoid of intelligence, and entirely unworthy of the great man whose destiny she shared; that she seemed to make it a point to be as disagreeable as possible to every one with whom she came in contact.

The new Empress was no more popular at Paris, where Joséphine was more and more regretted. During the absence of the Emperor, Joséphine held a regular Court at Malmaison. " The crowd rushed there, all the more eager because Their Majesties were at Antwerp,

and they had no fear of displeasing Marie-Louise." The astute courtiers already perceived signs of a return to power of the old favorite. The Emperor had invited Eugène to accompany him, and during the journey had treated him with marked distinction. Joséphine had discreetly revealed to her confidential friends that she had received from the Emperor a letter full of affection, in which he gave her permission to remain at Malmaison, even after the return of the Court to Saint-Cloud, and promised to pay her an early visit. This letter, which bears no date, runs as follows:

To the Empress Joséphine, at Malmaison

Mon amie, I am in receipt your letter. Eugène will give you news of my trip, and of the Empress. I highly approve of your going to the waters, and hope they will do you good.

I much desire to see you. If you are at Malmaison at the end of the month I will come to see you. I count upon being at Saint-Cloud the thirtieth of the month.

My health is very good; I lack nothing but the knowledge that you are contented and well. Let me know the name that you would like to assume en route.

Never doubt the entire sincerity of my affection for you; it will endure as long as I live; you would be very unjust not to believe it.

NAPOLEON

At this time Joséphine was very anxious about her daughter. After the stay of the Court at Compiègne, the Emperor had ordered Hortense to go to Amsterdam to rejoin her husband, with whom she had not lived since the birth of Louis-Napoleon two years be-

fore. Her health was still very bad, and she complied with the Emperor's order with great reluctance. The letters of Joséphine during the month of May all manifest her great anxiety, and express her desire that Hortense should accompany her to the waters, either to Aix-la-Chapelle, her first idea, or to Aix-les-Bains, in Savoie, where she finally decided to go. The condition of Hortense finally became so alarming that, at the end of May, her husband consented to her going to Plombières.

Napoleon's promised visit to Malmaison finally took place on the 13 June, twelve days after his return to Saint-Cloud. In a letter to her daughter, written the following day, Joséphine records her joy:

To Queen Hortense, at Plombières

Malmaison, 14 June 1810

My dear Hortense, . . . You ask me what I am doing. I had an hour of happiness yesterday: the Emperor came to see me. His presence made me happy, although it renewed my sorrows. Such emotions one would willingly go through often. All the time that he stayed with me I had sufficient courage to keep back the tears which I felt were ready to flow; but after he was gone I could not keep them back and I became very unhappy. He was kind and amiable to me as usual, and I hope that he read in my heart all the affection and all the devotion for him which fills me.

I spoke to him about your position and he listened to me with interest. He thinks that you should not return again to Holland, the King not having behaved as he ought to have done. . . . The Emperor's advice therefore is that you should take the waters for the necessary time and that

then you should write to your husband that the advice of the physicians is that you should live in a warm climate for some time, and in consequence you are going to Italy, to your brother's; as for your son, he will give orders that he is not to leave France. . . . Your son, who is here just now, is very well. He is pink and white.

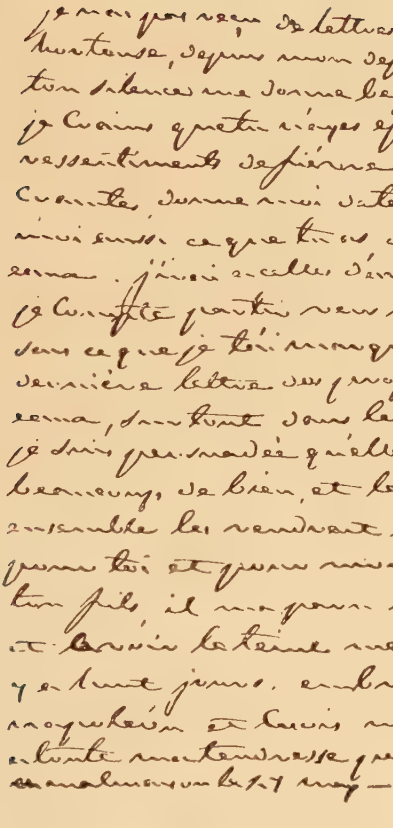
JOSÉPHINE

A few days later, on the 18 June, Joséphine set out for Aix-les-Bains, travelling under the name of the Comtesse d'Arberg, and accompanied only by four members of her household. She had chosen this place in preference to her old resort, Plombières, because "her health required distraction above all, and she hoped to find more of that in a place which she had not yet seen, and whose situation was picturesque," also because "the waters are especially renowned for the nerves."

The Empress occupied a modest habitation with Madame d'Audenarde, and the rest of her attendants were lodged in a small adjoining house. A week after her arrival she was rejoined by Madame de Rémusat.

At Aix, Joséphine led a very simple life. Bathing, excursions, reading the latest novels from Paris, dinner at eight o'clock, on account of the heat, a little music or a game afterwards — so passed her days. She had arrived before the opening of the season, but as soon as her presence was known visitors began to come from all of the neighboring towns in France, Switzerland and northern Italy.

On the 10 July she had a short visit from her son, who was on his way to Milan. Eugène had recently been made by the Emperor hereditary Grand-Duke of



Facsimile of Letter of Joséphine

Frankfort, which was generally assumed to be the end of any expectations that he might become King of Italy. It was rumored that Napoleon intended to unite Italy to the Empire, and that Eugène would cease to be his adopted son, when he had a son of his own. Joséphine feared that he would cease to be Viceroy at the same time that Hortense descended from the throne of Holland. This event had just been announced to her in a letter from the Emperor:

To the Empress Joséphine, at Aix

RAMBOUILLET, 8 July 1810

Mon amie, I have received your letter of the 3 July. You will have seen Eugène, and his presence will have done you good. I have learned with pleasure that the waters have benefited you.

The King of Holland has just abdicated the crown, leaving the regency to the Queen, in accordance with the constitution. He has departed from Amsterdam, and left the Grand-Duc de Berg.

I have united Holland to France; but this act is fortunate in that it emancipates the Queen, and this unfortunate girl is going to return to Paris with her son, the Grand-Duc de Berg: that will make her entirely happy.

My health is good. I have come here to hunt for several days. I shall see you with pleasure this autumn. Never doubt my friendship. I never change.

Take good care of your health; be gay, and believe in the sincerity of my affections.

NAPOLEON

Although Joséphine, in her letters to Hortense, complains of her quiet surroundings, and speaks of her

melancholy, her life at Aix seems to have been quite gay. The only incident which produced any excitement was a narrow escape which she had from death on a visit to the abbey of Hautecombe, when a sudden storm on the lake nearly caused her boat to founder. This is referred to in a letter from Napoleon at Trianon: "I have heard with anxiety the danger which you ran. For a child of the Isles of the Ocean to perish in a lake would be a catastrophe!"

On her return to Aix from this excursion, which had so nearly proved fatal, Joséphine found a chamberlain of Queen Hortense, who announced her arrival on the following day. The meeting of the mother and daughter was very affecting. The similarity in their situations had produced a new bond of sympathy between them. At the time of her arrival, Hortense was ill both in body and soul, threatened with consumption, and absolutely worn out and discouraged. But in spite of all her troubles, she was her usual amiable self, and proved a great consolation to her mother. It was at this time that Hortense was brought into intimate contact with Charles de Flahaut, whose social accomplishments had made him a great favorite with Joséphine. Their intimacy resulted fifteen months later in the birth of the future Duc de Morny, so well known under the Second Empire.

The visit of Hortense was very short, as she was ordered by the Emperor to return to Fontainebleau, and rejoin her two sons. She was therefore unable, as she wished, to accompany her mother on her tour of Switzerland during the months of September and October.

Leaving Aix the first of September, Joséphine went to Sécheron, a small village in the suburbs of Geneva. She made this her headquarters during the two following months while she visited all the principal points of interest in Switzerland. As she was never fond of travelling, the only explanation of her course at this time is the report which had just reached her of the condition of Marie-Louise. We find the first mention of the subject in a letter to her daughter:

To Queen Hortense, at Aix

SÉCHERON, 9 September 1810

My dear Hortense . . . I have not heard from the Emperor, but I thought that I ought to prove to him the interest which I take in the pregnancy of the Empress. I have just written him on the subject. I hope that this step will put him at his ease, and that he will be able to speak to me about it with a confidence as great as my attachment for him. . . .

Adieu, my dear daughter. I tenderly embrace you.

JOSÉPHINE

As usual, Joséphine's letter to the Emperor is not extant, but his reply is given in Queen Hortense's collection:

To the Empress Joséphine, at Aix

SAINT-CLOUD, 14 September 1810

Mon amie, I am in receipt your letter of the 9 September. I am pleased to learn that you are well. The Empress is in fact *grosse de quatre mois;* she is in good health and much attached to me. . . .

Adieu, mon amie; do not doubt my interest in you, and my affection for you. NAPOLEON

This correspondence seems to furnish a sufficient explanation of Joséphine's restlessness. She now showed a great desire to cancel the program which she herself had submitted to the Emperor in the spring, and to return at once to Malmaison. She evidently wrote Napoleon on the subject, for we have his reply:

To the Empress Joséphine, at Geneva

FONTAINEBLEAU, 1 October 1810

I have received your letter. Hortense, whom I have seen, will have told you what I think. Go to see your son this winter; come back to the waters of Aix next year, or else stay at Navarre for the spring. I would advise you to go to Navarre at once if I did not fear that you would grow weary there. My opinion is that you could only spend the winter conveniently at Milan or Navarre, but I do not wish in any way to put you out.

Adieu, mon amie. . . . Be contented, and do not lose your head. Never doubt my affections.

NAPOLEON

Joséphine returns to the same subject in two letters to her daughter, from Berne, the following month:

To Queen Hortense, at Fontainebleau

BERNE, 12 October 1810

My dear Hortense, . . . Not a word from you in the twenty days since our separation. What does your silence mean? . . . If in three days from now I do not receive letters telling me what to do, I shall think that the Emperor has not approved the request which I made of him. I shall leave for Geneva; . . . from Geneva I shall return to Mal-

maison; then at least I shall be in France, and if all the world deserts me I shall dwell there alone, conscious of having sacrificed my happiness to make that of others. . . .

JOSÉPHINE

BERNE, 13 October 1810

My dear Hortense, I am to-day in receipt your letter of the fourth. . . . After having reflected well, I shall follow the Emperor's first idea and shall establish myself at Navarre. It seems to me very unsuitable to go to Italy, especially in the winter. If it were for a visit of one or two months, I should gladly go to see my son; but to stop there longer is impossible. . . .

All that you tell me of the interest which the Emperor still has in me, gives me pleasure. I have made for him the greatest of sacrifices: *the affections of my heart;* I am sure that he will not forget me, if he says to himself sometimes that another person would never have had the courage to make such a sacrifice. . . . I would like to receive another line from you before arranging my departure for Navarre, in order to be sure that the Emperor approves of my passing the winter in that place. Speak to me frankly on that point.

I confess to you that if I were obliged to remove from France for more than a month I should die of grief. At Navarre at least I shall have the pleasure of seeing you sometimes. . . .

JOSÉPHINE

This revelation of the deep affection of Joséphine for Napoleon, in the confidence of an intimate personal letter to her daughter, seems a sufficient answer to those writers who have frequently expressed doubts of her sincerity.

Upon her return to Geneva, the 21 October, Joséphine found a note from the Emperor, and at once wrote Hortense to announce her final plans:

To Queen Hortense, at Fontainebleau

GENEVA, (no date) 1810

The Emperor has writtten me a very amiable little letter. You can judge, my dear Hortense, what pleasure it has given me. The Emperor advises me to go to Milan or Navarre. I have decided for Navarre. . . .

You will find me much changed, my dear daughter. The past month I have grown quite thin, and I feel that I need rest, and above all that the Emperor does not forget me. . . .

Adieu, my dear Hortense, I have just written the Emperor; I advise him that I count upon leaving Geneva the first of November, that I shall go to Malmaison for twenty-four hours: you will be very kind if you come there to make me a little visit. After that I shall go to stay at Navarre; let me know if this arrangement suits the Emperor. . . .

JOSÉPHINE

While she was still at Berne, or soon after her return to Geneva, Joséphine received a very long letter from Madame de Rémusat, in which, with many flattering phrases, she mingles the advice not to return to Paris. The letter bears no date, but was probably written early in October 1810. The note of Paul de Rémusat, in which he assigns the date to the last of 1812, or the beginning of 1813, is absurd. This letter is quoted at length in the collection of Queen Hortense, and in many of the biographies, but it hardly deserves so much space.

Apparently Joséphine had wished to meet Marie-Louise, but Madame de Rémusat assures her that the time has not yet come for such a step. Then follow long details to show the jealousy of Marie-Louise.

Among those whom the writer had seen was Duroc, the grand marshal of the palace; from him she gathered that Joséphine had still further sacrifices to make. " May you not find in the course of a rather more prolonged journey pleasures which you do not foresee at first? At Milan there awaits you the sweet spectacle of a son's merited success. Florence and Rome too would gratify your tastes. . . . You would encounter at every step in Italy memories which the Emperor would see recalled with no vexation, for to him they are connected with the epoch of his earliest glories." There is much more in the same strain, and it is evidently Napoleon who is speaking through the mouth of Duroc. The Emperor, however, was too tenderly disposed towards Joséphine to give her a positive order not to return to France, and she was not a woman to take a hint.

Before leaving Geneva, Joséphine purchased the château of Prégny, on the edge of the lake, facing Mont-Blanc, for which she paid nearly two hundred thousand francs. After this final extravagance, she set out on the first day of November for her stay of " twenty-four hours " at Malmaison. Napoleon was still at Fontainebleau with Marie-Louise, but his own return to the Tuileries was fixed for the 15 November. As Joséphine was still at Malmaison at that date, the Emperor sent Cambacérès to hasten her departure. She protested that she could not leave without time to pack up, and it was not until the 22 November that she actually reached Navarre.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

1811–1812

NAVARRE, MALMAISON AND MILAN

The Monotonous Life at Navarre — Joséphine's Health Improved — Visits from Hortense and Eugène — Joséphine's Fête-Day — News of the Birth of the King of Rome — Napoleon Again Pays Her Debts — She Plans for a New Château at Malmaison — Napoleon Exchanges Laeken for the Élysée — A Winter at Malmaison — Visit to Milan — Sojourns at Aix-les-Bains and Prégny

DURING the absence of Joséphine the interior of the château of Navarre had been restored as completely as possible, and refurnished in a simple manner, so that now it was quite habitable. It was still difficult to heat the immense oval salon, which occupied the centre of the building: it was paved with marble, and lighted only by windows in the vestibule, and openings pierced in the lofty dome above. But the architect had succeeded in arranging around this room a salon, a music-room and a card-room. A number of comfortable, if not very luxurious chambers had also been partitioned off, for the members of the household. By burning an immense quantity of wood and coal in the fireplaces, it was now possible to make the rooms fairly comfortable. Large sums had also been spent on the gardens and hothouses, and Navarre promised in time to become a second Malmaison.

The household was much more numerous than before: Joséphine had brought with her quite a number

of young girls, as pretty as they were poor, who were supposed to possess some talents as musicians. The life at the château was nevertheless very monotonous. Joséphine remained in her room until eleven o'clock, at which hour the déjeuner was served punctually. After this meal, which lasted three-quarters of an hour, the young people had music in the salon, while the older persons played cards or chess. In the afternoon there were promenades through the gardens and park, or drives in the forest of Évreux. If the weather was unfavorable, the time was passed in reading the latest novels, of which a box was received every week from Paris. At four o'clock every one was free, and Joséphine went to her room, where she usually summoned one of her old intimates for a confidential chat.

At six o'clock dinner was served, and there were always some invited guests from the city: the prefect, the mayor, and, most frequently, the bishop, Mgr. Bourlier. There was only one table, and the service was very luxurious. After dinner, there was music, cards, and sometimes dancing. Joséphine was fond of games, and played cards, backgammon, and billiards equally well. The evening usually ended at eleven o'clock, when every one retired.

Joséphine, whose health had always been good, had never been so well; she no longer suffered from the frequent headaches, which were due mainly to the irregular hours of the Emperor. She began to grow stout and for the first time in her life was obliged to wear a corset, in place of the former *brassières*. Her only trouble was with her eyes, which her physician told her was due to her crying so much, " nevertheless,"

she wrote her daughter, " for some time past I only weep occasionally."

The first of the year Hortense finally arrived for her long-promised visit, but while Joséphine received her with transports of joy, it was not the same with the other members of the household. The Queen, with all her affectation of simplicity, was very rigorous on the point of etiquette, and insisted that her chamberlains should appear every evening in full uniform, and her ladies in décolleté gowns. Under the mild régime of Joséphine every one had become somewhat careless, and Court ceremonial had been more honored in the breach than the observance. Therefore Hortense was generally regarded as a killjoy.

It was quite different when Eugène came. He had always preserved his simple, boyish manners, and was only too glad to escape from the tiresome etiquette he was obliged to maintain at Milan. He entered heartily into the games and pastimes of the young people, and was a universal favorite. His trunks were full of presents, which he distributed with a lavish hand, and this was the only way in which he recalled the fact that he was a prince.

The day of Saint-Joseph fell in March, and on the eighteenth " all the personages of the city came in carriages to Navarre to salute the Empress and wish her a happy fête-day." In the evening there was a celebration at the château, and Joséphine distributed presents. The following evening the Empress gave a ball in the grand salon, where a parquet floor had been laid for dancing, over the marble tiles.

On the 20 March, to continue the festivities, the

mayor gave a dinner in honor of the Empress. She sent all the members of her household, but remained at home herself, as she was expecting news from Paris. In this way she missed the first notification of the great event. At the moment that the guests came out from dinner, at eight o'clock, a despatch was received from Paris announcing the birth of the King of Rome. Enthusiastic toasts were drunk, the bells were rung, and the cannon fired.

Joséphine, who was anxiously waiting at Navarre, heard the sound of the guns and the bells before the postmaster could reach her presence. He had been advised by the courier on his way to Cherbourg, had hastily donned his uniform, and rushed to the château. When he communicated the news to Joséphine he noticed at first a slight frown upon her face; then, recovering her usual gracious manner, she said: "The Emperor cannot doubt the lively interest that I take in an event which crowns his joy. He knows that I cannot separate myself from his destiny, and that his happiness will always make me happy."

The following morning Eugène arrived at Navarre. The Emperor had had the delicate thought of sending him to tell Joséphine all the details of the happy event. She immediately sent her felicitations, and on the 22 March received from the Emperor the following letter, sent by one of his pages:

To the Empress Joséphine, at Navarre

PARIS, 22 March 1811

Mon amie, I have received your letter. I thank you. My son is big and healthy. I hope that he will do well. He has

my chest, my mouth, and my eyes. I hope that he will fulfill his destiny.

I am always well satisfied with Eugène. He has never caused me the slightest sorrow.

NAPOLEON

By this tacit comparison of his son and Eugène the Emperor gave Joséphine the greatest consolation in his power; by this association of the two names, he practically assured her of the continuance of his protection and good-will.

In fact, although his letters had not been so frequent of late, Napoleon, when he wrote, had been as tender and as cordial as ever, even with a touch of humor. Thus, he had written her in reply to her New Year's greetings: "They say that there are more women than men at Navarre." In a later letter he said: "I am well; I hope to have a son: I will let you know at once. . . . When you see me, you will find that my regard for you has not changed."

The Emperor was soon to give her a new proof of his kindness, in sending her permission to spend the springtime at Malmaison, which he knew would give her the greatest possible pleasure. The middle of April, therefore, we find her with Eugène at Malmaison, where she stayed during the whole month of May. This visit is passed over in silence by nearly all the biographers of Joséphine, who state that she remained at Navarre until the middle of September.

About this time Joséphine found herself once more in serious financial difficulties. In spite of the two millions she had received in 1811, she had debts to the amount of a million more, and no funds to complete

her purchase of Prégny, to pay for the repairs at Navarre, and meet her current bills. She was compelled to apply to the Emperor, who wrote her the following letter:

To the Empress Joséphine

TRIANON, 25 August 1811

I have received your letter. I see with pleasure that you are in good health. I am at Trianon for several days. I expect to go to Compiègne. My health is very good.

Put your affairs in order; do not spend more than a million and a half, and put as much aside every year. That will make a reserve of fifteen millions in ten years, for your grandchildren: it is nice to be able to give them something and to be useful to them. Instead of that I am told that you have debts: that would be very bad. Look after your affairs, and do not give to everybody who asks it. If you desire to please me, let me know that you have a large fund. Judge what a poor opinion I shall have of you if I know that you are in debt with an income of three millions.

Adieu, mon amie, take care of your health.

NAPOLEON

This letter, No. 227 in the Didot Collection, bears the date of 25 August 1813, but this is plainly an error. That year Napoleon left Paris the middle of April for the campaign in Saxony, and did not return until the 9 November. On the other hand, he was at the Trianon on the 25 August 1811, and that is undoubtedly the correct date.

After a careful inquiry into Joséphine's affairs, the report made to the Emperor showed that her situation was even worse than he expected, and on the 4 November he sent word to her intendant that he had allowed

an additional sum of a million francs for her dowry that year.

Two years later, on his return from the disastrous campaign of 1813, the Emperor sent at once for Mollien, the Minister of the Treasury, and, in place of many subjects far more important, he took up " the finances of the Empress Joséphine," the economies which she could and should make. " She can no longer count upon me to pay her debts," he said; " I no longer have the right to add anything to what I have done for her. The fate of her family must not rest only upon my head." Then he added in a low tone, as if speaking to himself: *Je suis mortel et plus qu'un autre.*

When Mollien told him that Joséphine had shed tears in the course of an interview he had with her, Napoleon exclaimed: " But she must not be allowed to weep! "

Immediately after this conference with Mollien, Napoleon wrote Joséphine:

To the Empress Joséphine, at Malmaison

FRIDAY, 8 A.M. (November) 1813

I am sending to learn how you are, for Hortense has told me that you were in bed yesterday. I have been annoyed with you on account of your debts; I do not wish you to have any; on the contrary, I hope that you will put a million aside each year, to give to your granddaughters when they are married.

However, never doubt my friendship for you, and do not worry over this matter.

Adieu, mon amie, send me word that you are well. They tell me that you are getting as fat as a good farmer's wife of Normandie.

NAPOLEON

As Masson says, after recounting this incident: *N'est-il pas toujours le même — et elle, toujours pareille!*

One would think that this new financial crisis, coming after so many others, might have made Joséphine, at least for a time, more reasonable, but such was not the case. While she was at Malmaison she sent for her old architect, Fontaine, to consult him about her plans for Navarre. She wanted to remove the dome, and change the château into an Italian villa, with a flat roof, and a crown of balustrades.

A month later, she again sends for the architect. This time she has another plan: to construct at Malmaison a new château, with all the modern improvements. As this will be very costly, in order to provide the funds, " she begs Fontaine to propose to the Emperor, if he finds an opportunity, an exchange of the palace of the Élysée against its value in money." This project did not displease Napoleon, who had often regretted his gift of the Élysée to Joséphine. There was no privacy at the Tuileries, and he had deprived himself of the only residence in Paris where he and his family could take a little exercise. Joséphine could not reside in the city, and for both of them it seemed an excellent arrangement. Napoleon was therefore inclined to welcome the proposal, but he did not care to add another million or two to the large sums he had already given the Em-

press. He accordingly made a counter-proposition: an exchange of the Élysée for the château of Laeken, a modern palace, richly furnished, and in perfect order, surrounded by a large park, and near an important city. He had purchased this property when First Consul, in April 1804, for about a million francs, and had subsequently spent another million in alterations and additions. The château was considered to be one of the finest of the imperial residences, and was always kept in perfect order, ready for immediate occupancy. By a decree under date of 10 February 1812 the Emperor authorized the exchange, but Joséphine never visited her new residence, even to take possession.

In September 1811 Joséphine returned to Malmaison for the winter. The Navarre party, as it was called, was now in a flourishing condition, and the Court of the Empress Joséphine fairly rivalled that of the Empress Marie-Louise.

In the spring of 1812 she had the pleasure of a short visit from Eugène, who had been summoned from Milan to receive the orders of the Emperor regarding the coming war with Russia. Augusta was expecting another baby the last of July, and Eugène persuaded his mother to make her long-deferred visit to Milan, to be present on that occasion.

In May she passed several days at Saint-Leu with Hortense and her children. But she did not venture to start for Italy without the permission of the Emperor. From Dantzig on the 8 June he wrote: "I hope that the waters will do you good, and I shall be glad to see you on my return"; but not a word about Italy.

Finally, from Gubin on the 20 June he wrote: "I do not see anything in the way of your going to Milan, to be with the Vicereine. You had better go there incognito. You will find it very hot."

This letter did not reach the Empress until the first of July, and then again her departure was deferred for two weeks by news of the illness of one of her grandchildren at Aix-la-Chapelle. As this did not prove serious, Joséphine finally set out on the 16 July, and reached Milan twelve days later. Her letter to Hortense is worth quoting:

To Queen Hortense, at Aix-la-Chapelle

Milan, 28 July 1812

I was very tired on my arrival here, my dear Hortense. . . . The pleasure of seeing Augusta has revived me. Her health is very good and her pregnancy is far advanced. I am with her at the Villa Bonaparte; I have Eugène's rooms. You can imagine all the pleasure it gave me to make the acquaintance of his little family. Your nephew is very strong, an infant Hercules. His sisters are extremely pretty. The elder is a beauty; she resembles her mother in the height of her forehead. The younger has a lively and clever face; she will be very pretty.

I have received here three letters from Eugène, the last under date of the 13 (July); his health is very good; he is still in pursuit of the Russians, without overtaking them. It is the general hope that the campaign will not be long. May this hope be realized! . . .

You do not speak of your health; I hope that the waters have done you good: it is the first prayer of a mother who loves you better than herself.

Joséphine

Only three days after Joséphine's arrival there was a fourth grandchild, the future Empress Amélie of Brazil. " Augusta," writes Joséphine the same day, " is perfectly well, and her daughter is superb, full of strength and health."

Before she had been at Milan a week, Joséphine was already uneasy, and anxious to leave for Aix-les-Bains. But she prolonged her stay for a month because Madame Mère and her brother, Cardinal Fesch, were at the waters, and she did not wish to meet them. At Aix she found Julie, " good and amiable as usual," with her sister, the former Désirée Clary, who was now the wife of Bernadotte, the Prince-Royal of Sweden. After their departure, at the end of September, she went to her château of Prégny for a short stay. A few days after her arrival she writes to Hortense: " I regret that you are not here with me. The weather is very fine. The views of the lake and of Mont-Blanc are magnificent. It only lacks you at Prégny to appreciate with delight the full charm of a quiet life."

On the 21 October her " quiet life " at Prégny came to an end, and Joséphine set out for Malmaison, leaving the good people of Geneva quite content with her departure, as " the kind of life which we have led since she is here does not agree with our habitudes."

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

1813–1814

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

The Malet Conspiracy — What it Revealed — Joséphine's Anxiety — Return of the Emperor — Joséphine and the King of Rome — Eugène Commands the Grand Army — Napoleon's Errors in 1813 — Hortense at Aix — Her Sons at Malmaison — Recollections of Napoleon the Third — A Doting Grandmother — Death of Mme. de Broc — Louis Returns to France — Eugène's Fidelity — Napoleon's Suspicions — He Asks Joséphine to Write Her Son — Her Despair — She Leaves for Navarre

JOSÉPHINE reached Malmaison on her return from Switzerland the 25 October, the day after the Malet affair. She wrote Eugène that the consternation had been general, but had not lasted long: at the end of several hours, everything was as calm as before. The whole plot turned upon the false report of the death of the Emperor. Armed with forged papers, and supported only by two battalions of the Paris garrison, this madman succeeded in gaining possession of the Post Office and the Treasury, and imprisoning Savary, the minister, and Pasquier, the prefect of police. He was finally arrested, condemned by a military court, and executed.

The Malet plot for the first time clearly revealed to the public the instability of the Empire, which was founded only on the glory and the genius of Napoleon.

In this moment of crisis, when the conspirators shouted, "The Emperor is dead!" not a voice was raised to cry: "L'Empereur est mort! Vive l'Empereur!"

When the news reached Napoleon he said: "While the Empress was there, the King of Rome, my ministers, and all the great bodies of the State! Is then a man everything here? the institutions, the oaths, nothing!" Yes, a man was everything, and nothing else counted.

Joséphine has often been accused, at this crisis in the career of the Emperor, of being interested only in her own selfish affairs, but her letters tell another story. She writes from Malmaison to her daughter: "You give me new life, my dear Hortense, in assuring me that you have read the letters of the Emperor to the Empress; she is very amiable to have shown them to you. . . . I must admit to you that I was very uneasy."

We have also the testimony of her attendant, Mlle. Avrillon: "No words can describe the effect produced by the bulletins which announced the terrible disasters of Moscow. The profound anxiety which we saw depicted upon the face of the Empress Joséphine contributed above all to make us sad. . . . Seeing her at these sad moments, it seemed as if she reproached Fate, as if she accused Heaven of having separated them, of having withdrawn from Napoleon the safeguard of her presence."

The Parisians had hardly finished reading the terrible Twenty-ninth Bulletin, when it became known that the Emperor was at the Tuileries. In the midst of the cares and the work which overwhelmed him, he

sent Joséphine, through Hortense, his tender remembrances. As soon as he could find an opportunity he visited Malmaison. Although there is much doubt as to the exact date, it seems to have been at this time, during the last week in December, that Joséphine persuaded him to let her see the little King of Rome. The meeting took place at the château known as Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne. The child usually took a drive every afternoon in the Bois with his governess, and on this occasion the Emperor accompanied them on horseback. Joséphine drove over from Malmaison and met them. This was the only time Joséphine ever saw the boy, and it is the general opinion that this was also her last meeting with Napoleon.

On New Year's day, Joséphine, always a prey to superstition, noticed the date with alarm. "Have you remarked," she said, "that the year begins on a *Friday,* and that it is Eighteen-*thirteen!* It is a sign of great misfortunes."

On leaving the remnants of the Grand Army, to return to Paris, the Emperor had placed Murat in command. In a letter to the Emperor from Posen under date of the 17 January, Eugène stated that the King of Naples had left that morning, in spite of all the efforts made by himself and Berthier to keep him, and that he himself had provisionally assumed the command, while awaiting the orders of the Emperor. Joséphine was much pleased by the terms in which the *Moniteur* officially announced the change: "The King of Naples, being indisposed, has been obliged to give up the command of the army, which he has placed in the hands of the Viceroy. The latter has more experi-

ence in administering large affairs, and he has the entire confidence of the Emperor."

At the same time, the Emperor sent Eugène the following letter:

To the Viceroy Eugène

PARIS, 22 January 1813

My son, take the command of the Grand Army. I regret that I did not leave it to you at the time of my departure. I flatter myself that you would have returned more slowly, and that I should not have sustained such immense losses. The past misfortunes are beyond remedy.

NAPOLEON

Notwithstanding the terrible Russian disaster, Napoleon at the beginning of 1813 was still in a position to save his empire. He had 250,000 veteran troops in Spain, and 150,000 more in the German fortresses. If he had abandoned the hopeless effort to keep Joseph on his throne, sent Ferdinand back to Spain, and concentrated all of his forces behind the Elbe, he could have met the Russians and Prussians with a seasoned army of 400,000 men, with a reserve force nearly as large in training in the dépôts of France; he could easily have defeated the Allies, and Austria would never have entered the coalition.

The Emperor left Paris for the front on the 15 April. In May he gained two brilliant victories, at Lutzen and Bautzen, but they were indecisive because he did not have the cavalry to follow them up. The first week in June he consented to an armistice, which was finally

EUGÈNE DE BEAUHARNAIS

extended until the 10 August, when Austria joined the Allies. Two weeks later he won at Dresden his last great victory, but this too proved indecisive; in October he was beaten at Leipzig, and forced to withdraw behind the Rhine. This was the poorest campaign ever conducted by Napoleon, " the weakest in conception, the most fertile in blunders, and the most disastrous in its results."

Joséphine passed the winter of 1813 very quietly at Malmaison. While the Emperor was in Paris, there were but few callers, but after his departure in April, they began once more to flock to Malmaison. The fine weather also made her life more cheerful. In May she spent several days with her daughter at Saint-Leu, and when Hortense left for Aix-les-Bains in June, she confided her children to her mother for the period of her absence. This was a great joy for Joséphine, who was a doting grandmother, whatever may have been her shortcomings as a mother.

This sojourn with their grandmother at Malmaison made such a profound impression upon the children, that Louis, the future Napoleon the Third, who was then only five years old, retraced his recollections of the visit sixty years later, in some memoirs which have remained unpublished. He writes:

" I can still see the Empress Joséphine in her salon, on the ground-floor, smothering me with her caresses, and already flattering my *amour-propre* by the attention she paid to my sayings. For my grandmother spoiled me in the fullest sense of the word, while on the contrary my mother, from my earliest infancy, en-

deavored to repress my faults, and develop my good qualities.

"I remember that, arrived at Malmaison, my brother and I were allowed to do as we pleased. The Empress, who was passionately fond of her plants and her hothouses, permitted us to cut and suck the sugar-cane, and she always told us to ask for anything we wanted. When she said this one day, on the eve of a fête, my brother, who was three years older than myself, and consequently more sentimental, asked for a watch with the picture of our mother. But when the Empress said to me: 'Louis, ask for what will give you the greatest pleasure,' I asked her to let me walk in the mud with the little ragamuffins. Let no one think that this request was ridiculous, for all the time that I remained in France, up to the age of seven years, it was one of my greatest griefs to be obliged to drive into the city with four or six horses."

Joséphine, who feared to be scolded by Hortense, for the way in which she spoiled the children, writes: "Do not worry about your sons, for they are entirely well. Their color is rose and white; I can assure you that they have not had the slightest illness since they are here. I am delighted to have them with me; they are charming."

In July, Joséphine was shocked to hear of the tragic death of Madame de Broc, the most intimate friend of Hortense. In visiting with the Queen the cascade of Grésy, which Joséphine had so much admired two years before, she slipped upon a wet plank, and fell into the gulf below. She was a sister of the wife of Marshal Ney, and a niece of Madame Campan; she

had been brought up with Hortense, married by her, and after the death of her husband had become her inseparable friend. Joséphine offered to go at once to her daughter if her presence and her care could be of any use to her, and also sent one of her chamberlains. But Hortense did not take advantage of this offer, and prolonged her stay at Aix until the middle of August. Upon her return she stopped only a day at Malmaison and then left with her sons for Dieppe, where she had been ordered to take sea baths. The departure of the two boys left a great void in the life of Joséphine. Their visit was almost the only pleasure she had during this trying year.

In November, the Rémusats came to dine at Malmaison, and brought the news that Louis had written the Emperor, expressing the wish to become reconciled with him, and not to be separated from him in his hour of misfortune. Joséphine, who never treasured up any grudges, expressed herself as thinking that this was very praiseworthy on the part of Louis. She only feared for her daughter "new torments." But Hortense reassured her on this point. She wrote: "I am not at all uneasy; my husband is a good Frenchman; he proves it by returning to France at a moment when all Europe declares against her. He is a worthy man, and, if our characters are not sympathetic, it is because we have faults which cannot be reconciled."

At this moment Eugène also gave proofs of devotion which contrasted strongly with the treachery of Murat and Bernadotte, who were so closely connected by marriage with the Bonapartes, and this served also to increase the maternal pride of Joséphine. The middle

of October, Eugène received a letter from his father-in-law, the King of Bavaria, announcing his adhesion to the coalition, and suggesting an armistice with the Army of Italy. Eugène declined this overture, and in his reply expressed his entire devotion to the Emperor. Augusta, at the same time, wrote her father in a similar vein, and in a letter to the Emperor stated that nothing in the world would ever cause her or her husband to forget their duty to him. A month later an aide de camp of the King of Bavaria asked for an interview with the Viceroy, and presented a letter containing a new offer to assure the future of his family. Once more Eugène refused, saying: "It is useless to deny that the star of the Emperor is beginning to pale, but it is all the greater reason for those who have received benefits from him to remain faithful."

This attitude of Eugène, plainly approved by his wife, could not but fill Joséphine and Hortense with pride. "Nothing which is good, noble and grand can astonish us on the part of our excellent Eugène," Augusta wrote to her *good mother,* "but since yesterday I am still more happy and proud to be the wife of such a man; and to allow you to share my joy I hasten to send you a copy of a letter he wrote me after having refused a crown they offered him, if he consented to be an *ingrat,* and a coward, in fine, to betray the Emperor like the King of Naples."

Notwithstanding this fine attitude on the part of Eugène, the Emperor appears to have conceived some doubts of his entire fidelity, which perhaps was natural in the midst of so many examples of treason and ingratitude. Upon no other basis can we explain the

letter he wrote to Joseph from Nogent on the 8 February 1814: "My brother, have this letter delivered personally to the Empress Joséphine. I have written her in order that she may write to Eugène." Upon receipt of this letter, of which the text has been lost, Joséphine wrote her son:

To the Viceroy Eugène

MALMAISON, 9 February 1814

Do not lose an instant, my dear Eugène; no matter what the obstacles, redouble your efforts to fulfill the order which the Emperor has given you. He has just written me on this subject. His intention is that you should retire upon the Alps, leaving in Mantua and the (strong) places of Italy only the Italian troops. His letter ends with these words: *France above all! France needs all of her children.* Come then, my dear son, make haste; never will your zeal have better served the Emperor. I can assure you that every moment is precious. I know that your wife was arranging to leave Milan. Tell me if I can be of service to her.

Adieu, my dear Eugène, I have only the time to embrace you, and to repeat to you to come very quickly.

JOSÉPHINE

At that critical time it took the fastest courier a week to go from Paris to Milan, and it was not until the 18 February that Eugène received at Volta this letter from his mother. He seems, quite naturally, to have resented this new method of the Emperor, in transmitting orders to one of his lieutenants through his mother, instead of by the Minister of War, or the Chief of Staff. The tone, almost of supplication, used by Joséphine, seemed to imply that the Emperor doubted his fidelity.

There followed a long correspondence between the Viceroy and the Emperor, for which we have no space here. It is all set forth at length in the *Mémoires* of Eugène, to which the reader is referred. Eugène attempts, but with poor success, to justify his adhesion to what he considered to be the letter, if not the spirit, of the Emperor's orders.

In the meantime the Allies were steadily drawing nearer to Paris, which was a hotbed of treason. Even at Malmaison, although she knew it not, Joséphine was surrounded by spies and traitors in her own household. By decision of the Council of State, and the Emperor's own orders, Marie-Louise and the King of Rome were on the point of leaving for Blois. Hortense, who had been commanded to follow the Court, wrote to her mother, announcing the news. Joséphine replied:

To Queen Hortense, at Paris

MALMAISON, 28 March 1814

My dear Hortense, I had courage up to the moment I received your letter. I cannot think without anguish that I am separating myself from you, God knows for how long a time. I am following your advice: I shall leave to-morrow for Navarre. I have here only a guard of sixteen men, and all are wounded. I shall keep them, but really I have no need of them. I am so unhappy at being separated from my children that I am indifferent to my fate. I am troubled only about you. Try to send me news; keep me informed of your plans, and tell me where you go. I shall at least try to follow you from afar.

Adieu, my dear daughter: I embrace you tenderly.

JOSÉPHINE

The following morning, which was cold and wet, Joséphine left Malmaison with her household. As she was not sure of finding relays at the posts en route, she took all of her horses and carriages. In cash, she had only about fifty thousand francs which she had borrowed from Hortense and one or two friends. In a wadded petticoat were sewn her most valuable diamonds and pearls, while her jewelry cases were packed in the carriages. It was impossible to carry with her anything more.

She travelled slowly, passing the night at Mantes, and taking two days for the journey. She was very well received at Évreux. The authorities offered her a guard of honor at the château, for she had left behind at Malmaison the sixteen wounded soldiers of the Imperial Guard.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

1814

THE LAST DAYS AT MALMAISON

Joséphine at Navarre — Arrival of Hortense — The Emperor at Fontainebleau — The Treaty of the 11 April — Provisions for the Family — Joséphine Returns to Malmaison — Hortense Arrives — The Czar Calls — Eugène Leaves Italy — He Is Called to Paris — Hortense, Duchesse de Saint-Leu — Eugène Received by the King — Joséphine's Fears — Her Final Illness and Death — How Napoleon Received the News — His Visit to Malmaison

AT Navarre, Joséphine found herself entirely out of touch with everything and everybody. The day after her arrival she sent her daughter the following letter, the last one which we have in the collection of Queen Hortense:

To Queen Hortense (at Chartres)

NAVARRE, 31 March 1814

My dear Hortense, . . . I cannot tell you how miserable I am. In the painful positions in which I have found myself, I have had courage: I shall have it to bear the reverses of fortune; but I have not sufficient to put up with the absence of my children and the uncertainty of their fate. For two days I have not ceased to shed tears. Send me news of yourself and of your children; if you have any of Eugène and of his family let me know. I very much fear that no news will come from Paris, as the post from Paris to

Évreux is suspended, which has caused many rumors. Among other things it is said that the Neuilly bridge has been occupied by the enemy. This would be very near to Malmaison. . . .

Adieu, my dear daughter, I await your reply to console me. I tenderly embrace you. as well as your children.

JOSÉPHINE

Hardly was this letter written and despatched when a courier arrived from Hortense, with the news that Paris had capitulated, and that the Emperor was at Fontainebleau; then Hortense herself suddenly appeared, with her children.

After much hesitation, as to whether to leave Paris or to remain, at nine o'clock on the night of the 29 March, under the threat of Louis to take her children, Hortense had decided to set out, and rejoin Marie-Louise. She spent the first night at Glatigny, near Versailles; the next morning, at an early hour, she went to the Trianon; and later, proceeded to Rambouillet. There she found her brothers-in-law, Joseph and Jérôme, and spent the night. The following morning she received a courier from Louis bearing a formal order from the Regent to rejoin her at Blois. In this Hortense saw another instance of her husband's "persecutions." She notified Louis, Marie-Louise, and the Emperor, of her refusal to obey; ordered her carriage, and started for Navarre. At Maintenon she found an escort, and after dark arrived at a château belonging to a member of her household. At five o'clock the next morning, the first of April, she again started out, and, ten miles from Navarre, was met by M. de Pourtalès with some horses sent by her mother.

During the night of the second-third April a representative of the Duc de Bassano arrived as bearer of definite news from Fontainebleau. He recounted the treason of Marmont, the occupation of Paris, and the despair of the Emperor. The scene related by Mlle. Cochelet is entirely imaginary. No one had then heard of any plan to send Napoleon to Elba, and Joséphine could hardly have exclaimed: "But for his wife, I would go to join him in his captivity."

After this, several days passed without further news. On the 7 April Joséphine wrote to an old friend, the Comtesse Caffarelli: "Our hearts are broken at all that is happening, and particularly at the ingratitude of the French. The papers are full of the most horrible abuse. If you have not read them, do not take the trouble, for they will hurt you."

In the meantime, at Fontainebleau, during these days of supreme agony, Napoleon, "with an admirable lucidity and an admirable justice," was making what may be termed his political testament, and arranging the future of his entire family. In the treaty signed on the 11 April by the ministers of the allied powers, by the marshals in the name of the Emperor, and by all the members of the provisional government — this treaty which was the price of his abdication — the Beauharnais received the greatest consideration. To the princes and princesses of the Imperial family was attributed a revenue of two millions and a half of francs, entirely apart from what property they might possess, either real or personal. Of this sum, Louis was allowed two hundred thousand francs; Madame, Élisa and Pauline, each three hundred thousand; Hortense, four

hundred thousand; and Joseph and Jérôme each five hundred thousand. The allowance of the Empress Joséphine was reduced to a million francs, and she too was permitted to retain all of her property.

By another article it was provided that Prince Eugène, Viceroy of Italy, should receive a "suitable establishment outside of France."

The night of the 12 April, Napoleon sought by poison the death from which he had escaped on so many fields of battle, but in vain. "God does not wish it!" he said, and the following morning he in turn signed the treaty.

That same day the Duc de Berry landed at Cherbourg, and en route for Paris he sent one of the gentlemen who accompanied him, to Malmaison, "to offer to Joséphine a guard of honor and to assure her that he would be charmed to do everything in his power to be agreeable to her, as he had for her as much respect as admiration." But Joséphine had already left Navarre for Malmaison. The 16 April the *Journal des Débats* stated: "The mother of Prince Eugène has returned to Malmaison." Joséphine was far from being pleased with this form of announcement.

Alexander immediately sent one of his attendants to announce his visit for the following day, and promptly at one-thirty o'clock he arrived. It was evident that he had called to see Hortense rather than her mother, but he was full of courtesy and deference for Joséphine, and gave her all of her titles. After a long call, he left just at the moment that Hortense arrived with her sons. "She, who was usually so amiable, was hardly so with him; she remained cold, very dignified, and made no reply to the offers which the Czar made for

herself and her children." As for the Empress Joséphine, " her goodness, her kindness, her frankness, all charmed him."

During the past few weeks Joséphine, in her trouble, for once had forgotten to order new gowns, but now her old desire to please and to charm returned with full force, and she commanded a number of summer frocks, in batiste and embroidered muslin, such as she formerly wore in the " beaux jours " at Malmaison.

As Joséphine had expected, Alexander soon returned, but she perceived that the visit was for Hortense, who again held herself aloof, and treated him " as one should receive the conquerors of her country." This resistance, however, only served to increase the desire of Alexander to win her, and he redoubled his attentions.

On the 17 April, when he received news of the events at Paris, Eugène, who up to that time had held the Austrians in check, signed an agreement for a suspension of hostilities, and took the route for the Alps with the French troops in his army. In a final proclamation, which did not mention the name of the Emperor, he made an appeal which can only be considered as a personal bid for popular support: " A people, good, generous, faithful, has rights upon the remainder of my existence, which for ten years past I have consecrated to its service. As long as I am permitted to occupy myself with its happiness, which was always the dearest concern of my life, I ask for myself no other future."

At the same time Eugène persuaded the Italian troops under his orders, to send a deputation in his

favor to Paris. But during his absence from Milan, three separate factions had developed: one favorable to Murat, a second purely Italian, and a third, the strongest and richest, for Austria. There was an *émeute* at the capital, accompanied by pillage, and finally a massacre.

When this news reached Mantua, the army acclaimed Eugène as King of Italy, and wished to march on Milan, but the Viceroy realized that there was no chance against a capital in revolt, and Austria, which would send her troops there. " I do not wish," he said, " to impose myself upon a country which does not desire me, . . . adding a civil war with all its accompanying evils. . . . The country refuses my support. It is enough." On the 23 April he signed another convention with the Austrians in which he surrendered everything, and departed for Munich with his wife, and her baby who was only nine days old.

Eugène now had little to expect except under the provisions of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, and the gratitude of Austria, fortified by the support of Alexander. As soon as Joséphine knew that he was at Munich, she wrote to urge him to come to Paris, and on the 9 May he arrived.

In the meantime the relations between the Czar and Hortense had become more cordial. He was almost a daily visitor at Malmaison, and was now on terms of intimate friendship with Joséphine and her daughter. He had offered to procure for the Queen an independent position in France, with an adequate revenue; the guardianship of her children; and a ducal title, the highest that the King could confer. His thought was

to separate her interests entirely from any dependence on the Emperor or his family. The letters patent, dated by the King in the *eighteenth* year of his reign, conferred the title of Duchesse de Saint-Leu, not on Madame Louis Bonaparte, nor on the Queen of Holland, but on *Mademoiselle de Beauharnais!* Hortense refused to accept this formula. " I think that it is my duty," she said, " not to allow people to forget that I have been a queen, although I do not make it a point of being so called." It was finally arranged that she should be designated as Madame de Beauharnais, and her susceptibilities were satisfied.

There is little doubt that Joséphine wished to be confirmed in her title of Duchesse de Navarre, but she refused to sign the letter to the King prepared for her by Madame de Rémusat. There is reason to think, however, that she wrote another, in which she asked for Eugène the dignity of constable, the highest military gift in the power of the King to bestow.

Eugène also had neglected nothing to conciliate the Bourbons. On his departure from Munich, he wrote the King to announce his visit, for as he said to his wife, " I could not think of arriving at Paris, without at once presenting myself to him." He had hardly reached Malmaison, and embraced his mother and sister, before he received a summons to appear at the Tuileries.

When Eugène was announced, under the title of Marquis de Beauharnais, it is reported that the King arose from his chair, and advanced to meet him, cordially extending his hand. He then exclaimed to the person who had presented the Viceroy: " Say, His

Highness Prince Eugène, Monsieur, and add Constable of France, if such is his good pleasure! " This report rests upon the authority of the editor of the *Mémoires du Prince Eugène,* and may be true: it is certain that the Bourbons did everything in their power to detach the Beauharnais from their adhesion to the Emperor.

On the 14 May the Czar came informally to dine with Hortense, who was now settled at Saint-Leu. Joséphine was present, but there were no strangers except Caulaincourt and the wife of Marshal Ney. During the drive in open carriages through the park, the Czar was very kind and amiable, and expressed himself both to Eugène and Hortense as desirous of doing everything in his power to assure their future.

Joséphine had come only upon the urgent request of Hortense; she was sad and discouraged. She had but little confidence in the promises of the Czar, and felt that after his departure the Bourbons would do nothing. She realized better than her children how little confidence could be placed in royal promises. When she read two days later in the official journal that the Emperor of Russia had gone to Saint-Leu to dine with " Prince Eugène, his mother and sister," her comments were very bitter. There seemed to be a deliberate intention to deny her the position and rank which had been accorded her.

This visit to Saint-Leu was the beginning of Joséphine's illness, which was to terminate fatally exactly two weeks later. She took a severe cold, which she refused to care for, saying that it was nothing. In the evening she descended for dinner, clad in one of her

lightest décolleté gowns. After breakfast the following morning she returned to Malmaison.

Monday, the 23 May, the King of Prussia came to call at Malmaison, and remained for dinner. He was accompanied by his two sons, of whom one was later to be known as the Emperor William. The following day Joséphine had to receive the Russian grand-dukes, Nicholas and Michel. These official receptions, these visits of ceremony, fatigued her terribly. In the evening she came to dinner as usual. Later there was a dance, and she opened the ball with the Czar; then they went into the park, where they promenaded for a long time, and she took more cold.

Wednesday, the 25 May, a small eruption appeared all over her body, but principally upon her arms and chest. Eugène and Hortense, who were themselves both suffering from colds, were vaguely disturbed, but far from anticipating a fatal result. He wrote Augusta that day: "Our mother has been suffering for two days, and this morning she has considerable fever; the doctor says that it is only catarrh, but I do not think she is at all well." The following night her regular physician found her tongue affected and her whole head congested, and applied a blister to her neck.

Friday, the 27 May, Alexander was to have dined with Joséphine for the last time before leaving for London. On his arrival with several other guests, he found both Joséphine and Eugène ill in bed, and only Hortense able to receive the party, who all left early except the Czar.

Saturday, the illness of the Empress became so grave that there was a consultation of physicians.

Eugène wrote his wife that he did not think his mother would live through the day. That night Joséphine begged Hortense, who was nearly worn out, to retire and get a little rest.

Sunday, the 29 May, which was Whit Sunday, it was evident that Joséphine was dying. Her features had sensibly changed, and her respiration was short and difficult. Hortense sent for Eugène, and at noon Joséphine expired in their arms. Just before her death the sacraments were administered by the Abbé Bertrand, tutor of Hortense's children, as Joséphine's almoner was absent. According to legend, the last delirious words of the Empress were: "Napoleon . . . Elba!"

On Monday the body was embalmed and placed in a lead coffin enclosed in oak. The public were now admitted to Malmaison, and it is estimated that more than twenty thousand people passed before the bier.

The funeral took place on Thursday, the 2 June, when the coffin was taken to the church at Rueil. All of the sovereigns present at Paris were represented, and there was a large crowd at the church. The military honors were furnished by a detachment of the Russian Imperial Guards.

Joséphine's tomb is at the right hand of the choir of the church. It is of white marble, with a kneeling figure of the Empress in her coronation robes. The inscription runs simply:

A
JOSEPHINE
EUGENE ET HORTENSE
1825

There was nothing mysterious about the death of Joséphine: no indication, and no suspicion of poison; nevertheless there were rumors that such was the cause of her death. The autopsy left no doubts as to the origin and the progress of the malady: a cold, not cared for, and aggravated by her imprudence.

Two hours after the death of Joséphine, in compliance with sovereign etiquette, Eugène and Hortense left Malmaison for Saint-Leu, and were not present at the funeral. Although they sent out the usual notices of the death of their mother, neither one of them seems to have taken the trouble to inform Napoleon of the event. He learned the news through a paper sent him from Genoa by a valet whom he had sent to France, charged with commissions for several persons, including Joséphine herself. "At the news of her death," writes an eye-witness, "he appeared profoundly afflicted; he shut himself up in his room, and saw no one except the grand marshal."

A year later, before leaving Paris for the fatal campaign of Waterloo, Napoleon wished to visit Malmaison, and was met there by Hortense, who had not had the courage to return since the fatal day. For an hour he walked with Hortense in the garden, talking only of Joséphine. Then he visited one by one the different rooms, ending with the chamber where Joséphine had died. Here he remained for a long time alone, and came out with his eyes filled with tears. "Poor Joséphine," he said to Hortense, "she may have had her faults, but she at least would never have abandoned me!"

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

1763–1814

JOSEPHINE'S PERSONALITY

Her Connection with Martinique — Her Statue at Fort-de-France — Her Legend — Her Claims to Beauty — Her Intellect — Her Prodigality — Her Personal Magnetism — Her Affections — Her Desire to Please — Her Falsehoods — Her Final Deception — Her Succession — Fate of Her Homes — Napoleon's Last Visit to Malmaison — The *Souvenir de Malmaison*

AS the life of Napoleon will always be associated with the names of three small islands: Corsica, Elba, and Saint Helena; so that of Joséphine will ever be connected with Martinique. There is little of interest in the capital city, Fort-de-France, apart from the Savane, the large green public square, and there the visitor will be attracted mainly by the beautiful marble statue of the Empress. "Sea-winds have bitten it; tropical rains have streaked it; some microscopic growth has darkened the exquisite hollow of the throat. And yet such is the human charm of the figure that you almost fancy you are gazing at a living presence. Perhaps the profile is less artistically real — statuesque to the point of betraying the chisel; but when you look straight up into the sweet Creole face, you can believe she lives: all the wonderful West Indian charm of the woman is there. She is standing just in front of the Savane, robed in the fashion of

the First Empire, with gracious arms and shoulders bare: one hand leans upon a medallion bearing the eagle profile of Napoleon. . . . Over the violet space of summer sea, through the vast splendor of azure light, she is looking back to the place of her birth, back to the beautiful drowsy Trois-Îlets — and always with the same half-dreaming, half-plaintive smile — unutterably touching."

The statue so lovingly described by Hearn may be said to bear about the same relation to the real woman that the Joséphine of romance bears to the Joséphine of history. Since her death a hundred and ten years ago, the legend of Joséphine has passed through three phases. Under the Restoration, it was Joséphine the protector of the Émigrés that all good Royalists were called on to lament. The key-note was struck by the Archbishop of Tours in his funeral oration: "How many unfortunates, condemned, by their fidelity to the august family of the Bourbons, to live in exile from their fatherland, are beholden to her persistent and touching intercession for their restoration to their families, and to the country which saw their birth?"

Under the Second Empire, the writers who wished to curry favor with the new Emperor devoted special attention to Joséphine, and one would almost be led to believe that he occupied the throne by right of descent from his grandmother the Empress Joséphine, rather than as heir to his uncle the Emperor Napoleon. "Joséphine was painted as the sorrowful martyr to necessities of State. She was the fondly loving wife repudiated after fourteen years of faithful wedlock."

Under the Third Republic, the admirers of the Great

Emperor, less fettered in their views, have gone as far in the other direction: they deny to Joséphine any attachment to Napoleon except that of self-interest, and blame him only for not repudiating her sooner.

As usual, the truth of History lies between these two extremes.

It will always be a moot point how a woman possessed of so little intellect, and endowed with no surpassing physical beauty, managed to gain, and retain for fourteen years, the love of a man six years her junior, and that man Napoleon!

First, with regard to her beauty: We have innumerable portraits of Joséphine, for she loved to be painted, and sat to all the celebrated artists of her day: David, Gérard, Gros, Isabey, Prud'hon and many others. None of these portraits gives the idea of a beautiful woman.

The written descriptions of her appearance are even more unflattering. It is impossible to forget the picture of the faded Creole, past her prime, endeavoring to hide the ravages of time by an extravagant use of powder and rouge; the closed lips which concealed her bad teeth; all the artifices to supply the deficiencies of nature. But on the other hand we have the admissions even of unfriendly observers that her eyes were beautiful, her smile always charming, her figure slender, supple, well-proportioned, needing no corset to support it; always clothed in the most perfect taste. To complete the picture we have the graceful movements of her elegant, indolent body, for in the words of Napoleon, " she was graceful even in going to bed "; and

the harmony of her soft, caressing voice, which could soothe and put the Emperor to sleep even when most harassed by the cares of State.

All the memoirs of her time are agreed in stating that Joséphine had but little intellect, but they are almost equally in accord in admitting that she supplied the deficiency by her marvellous *savoir faire*. Her education had been only rudimentary, and she never increased her knowledge by reading. There was an excellent library at Malmaison, and there was always a reader on her staff, chosen more for her beauty than for any other qualification, but no one ever heard of Joséphine opening a book except to read Napoleon to sleep.

Joséphine was a great collector, and the château of Malmaison was a regular museum of valuable paintings, choice statuary, and rare objets d'art. But there is nothing to show that she prized her collection except for the value it represented in money. It was only another exhibition of her mania for spending. It must be admitted, however, that Joséphine loved her flowers and her plants, and her hothouses and gardens were the finest in Europe.

That Joséphine was prodigal in her expenditures of money cannot be denied, but altogether too much has been made of her debts by Monsieur Masson and other recent biographers. The matter has already been quite fully covered in these pages, and it is not necessary to go into it further here. Napoleon's wrath at the discovery of her debts, and the terror of Joséphine during these "scenes," were both largely assumed. It has even been said that "Napoleon liked her to be in debt be-

cause it made her utterly dependent on him"! It must be remembered, however, that, as Napoleon once stated: "It is fortunate that the French are to be ruled through their vanity." All of the display and the etiquette of the Imperial Court were irksome to Napoleon, with his simple tastes, but he endured them because it was part of his policy. For the same reason he expected Joséphine to spend lavishly the handsome allowance he gave her, although with his love of order he did not wish her to exceed her income. It was all a part of his general policy of fostering the industries of the country, which has made France what it is today, the leader in the manufacture of articles of luxury and display in every line.

The secret of Joséphine's attraction for Napoleon appears to have been that rare quality which, for lack of a better term, we may call personal magnetism. She was one of those exceptional characters who seem to possess the natural gift of attracting others while themselves giving little or nothing in return. But to win all hearts as she did, Joséphine at bottom must have possessed a large fund of human sympathy. All agree in speaking of her affability; she was "gentle and kind, affable and indulgent to all, without respect to persons."

The Joséphine of legend is emphatically "*la bonne Joséphine.*" She could never refuse a request: she was always giving lavishly, indiscriminately. It was also impossible for her to treasure up grievances against any one — even the Bonapartes who did so much to injure her. With Napoleon's mistresses, she displayed the same lack of resentment. She received Madame

Walewska at Malmaison, and lavished affection upon her child. She made Madame Gazzani one of her chosen attendants after her divorce.

Joséphine has frequently been accused of loving no one but herself, but her letters to her children show that she was a very affectionate and demonstrative mother, and she was certainly a doting grandmother. It seems hardly possible that she was insincere, or that, as one writer puts it, "Joséphine's affections were a vigorous expression of her self-love."

No one can question the fact of Napoleon's love for Joséphine, which lasted as long as he lived; and certainly after his return from Egypt she was to him a model wife. She anticipated his every wish; she never kept him waiting; she was always ready to accompany him on his journeys; she went cheerfully through the most arduous social duties; and exerted herself to conciliate all whom he wished to win to his interests. From Napoleon she extorted the admiring exclamation: "I win battles; Joséphine wins hearts!"

In fact Joséphine was an *enjôleuse:* to win, to seduce, by cajoleries, by caresses, by soft words — in short, *to please,* was the principal aim of her existence. Even where she had no end to gain, where no self-interest was involved, she strove to please simply because it gave her pleasure. It was to please that she embellished her home; that she spent a fortune on jewels and toilettes; that she wore herself out with visits, receptions, and journeys; that she triumphed over her headaches, neglected her colds, and went to her death. This explains all: this is the true key to her character.

This also is the explanation of her falsehoods, for by the testimony of all her contemporaries, friends and foes alike, Joséphine was one of the greatest liars who ever lived. If she has succeeded in imposing on history, it is largely due to the fact that she imposed on Napoleon, which in itself is no small feat! He was convinced that she loved only him; he represents her as the model wife — attentive, affectionate, and devoted; he thinks she is extravagant, but how elegant and how graceful she is! how beautifully she dresses! how she excels in everything she does! For him she is the perfect woman!

By a supreme falsehood, and this one posthumous, she leaves with her attendants the impression, and with Napoleon the conviction, that she dies of love for him, overwhelmed by the disasters of France and the Empire, in despair because she could not share his fate at Elba, and mollify by her loving tenderness the rigors of his exile.

On the day after his return from Elba, in March 1815, he said to Corvisart at the Tuileries: "You let my poor Joséphine die!"

Then he sent for Horau, her regular physician, and demanded the fullest details of her death:

"What was the cause of her illness?"

"Anxiety . . . chagrin . . ."

"You say that she was anxious, what was the cause of her chagrin?"

"What had taken place, Sire; the position of Your Majesty."

"Ah! then, she spoke of me?"

"Often, very often."

" Good woman, good Joséphine! She loved me truly, did she not? "

This conviction remained with Napoleon until the end of his life, and in speaking of Joséphine at Saint Helena, he exclaimed: " She was the best woman in France! "

Aside from her two châteaux of Malmaison and Prégny, and her fine collection of jewels, Joséphine left little of value at the time of her death. In the settlement of her estate, Eugène took Malmaison, and assumed the payment of her debts, while Hortense received Prégny and her jewels, the share of each of her children amounting to about two million francs when the estate was finally settled.

Of all the places closely associated with the life of Joséphine, only Malmaison remains to-day. During the lifetime of Eugène, a large part of the estate was cut up and sold in parcels. In June 1829, five years after his death, in the final settlement of his estate it was found necessary to sell the château. After passing through several hands, it was bought in 1861 by Napoleon the Third and made a museum of Napoleonic souvenirs. During the Franco-Prussian war it was pillaged by the Germans and damaged by fire. Finally it was purchased, early in the present century, by a Jewish millionaire, who had the generous thought of restoring it as nearly as possible to its former condition and presenting it to the State as a museum of relics of Napoleon and Joséphine.

Prégny, which was taken by Hortense, as her portion of the real estate, was sold by her in 1817 for about

one hundred thousand francs. Nearly all of the furniture was removed by Hortense, but the buildings remain in the same condition as in the time of Joséphine.

Under the terms of the grant to the Empress, at her death Navarre passed to Eugène, and from him to his eldest son, Auguste. In 1834 this prince married the Queen of Portugal, but died at Lisbon less than four months later. He was succeeded as Duc de Navarre by his brother Maximilian, who married the Grande-Duchesse Marie of Russia, daughter of Czar Nicholas. On his death in 1852 the title was claimed by his son Prince Nicholas, but the French Government refused its assent, on the ground that, as a member of the imperial family of Russia, he could not swear fidelity to the Emperor of the French. It was thus that the grandson of Prince Eugène was deprived by his cousin Napoleon the Third of the duchy erected by Napoleon the First, and by virtue of a clause in the original grant which four successive Governments of France had neglected to invoke! But long before this date the estate of Navarre had been sold by the heirs of Eugène, with the permission of the Government, and the proceeds, over a million francs, invested in French bonds.

On the Sunday following the battle of Waterloo, the 25 June 1815, Napoleon left Paris for the last time, and went to Malmaison. Here, before departing for his final exile, he spent four days in wandering through the château and the park, as if in search of the beloved shade which in disappearing from his life seemed to have taken with it his happiness and his fortune.

Such, charming and exquisite, she lives in his mem-

ory, to soften his agony and soothe his exile, and such, after the lapse of a hundred years, she still appears in the eyes of posterity.

" In vain," says Monsieur Masson, " in vain have we been compelled to tell the truth about her, to throw upon her life the light of History: the legend still prevails. Her memory will never suffer from what has been written — even from what has been proven.

" In the dispersal and quick disappearance of the things she loved, there remains only the name of a flower: the *Souvenir de Malmaison,* and thus her image, and the emblem of her life, will be one of these lovely roses, tender and fragile, bright and nacreous, which she loved and named. . . . When for a brief moment the rose has given us a vision of its grace, a petal loosens and falls, then another, and another, until finally it is like a fall of fragrant snow, projecting into the warm atmosphere hardly the repressed vibration of a sigh; but the fragrance of the withering petals long floats on the air, and perfumes the room."

With this beautiful thought we take our leave of Napoleon's charming " little Creole."

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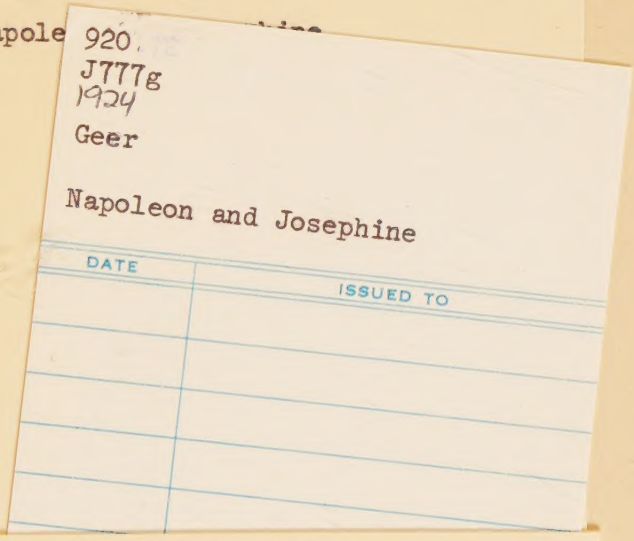

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